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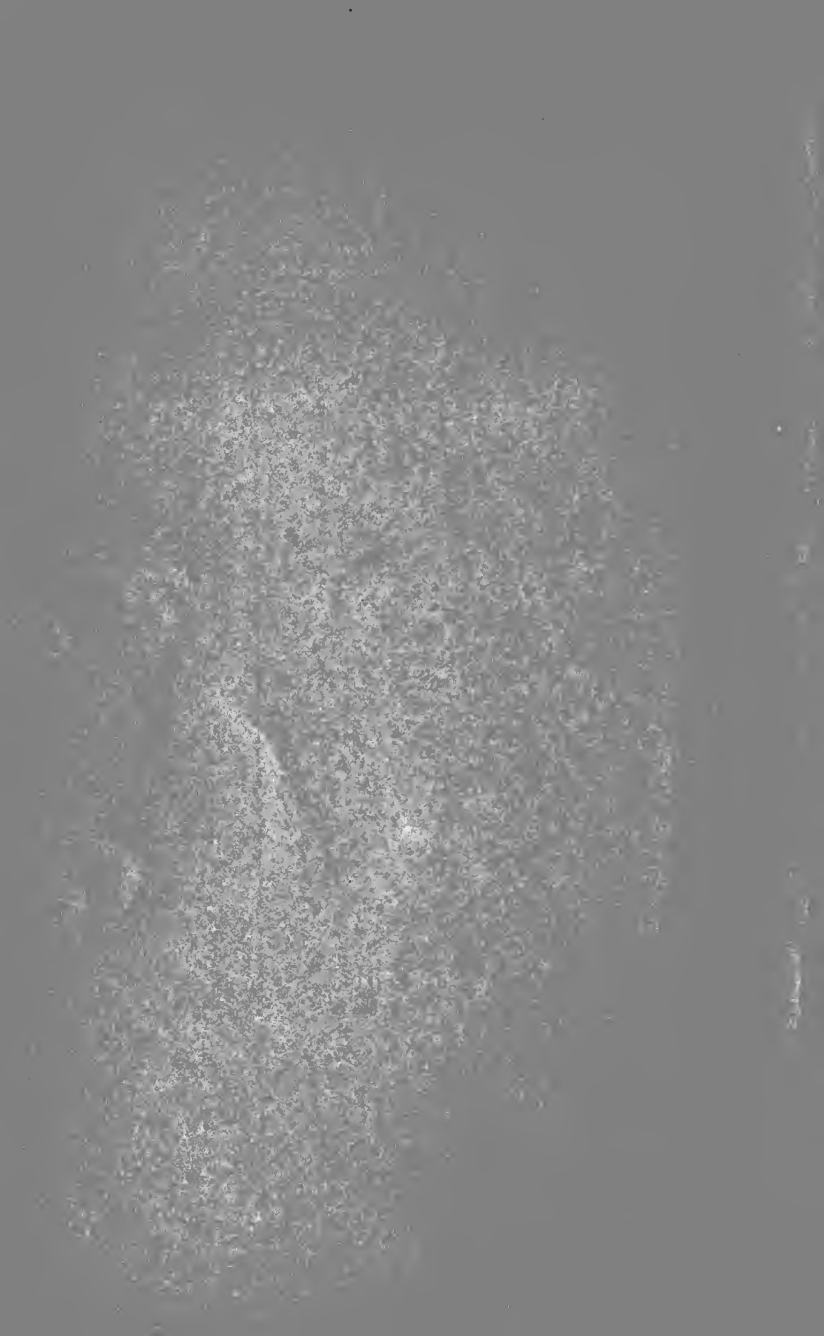


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BY
ARTHUR W. PINERO



FRENCH'S STANDARD LIBRARY EDITION

SAMUEL FRENCH, 24 West 22d Street, New York

IN CHANCERY

An Original Fantastic Comedy in Three Acts

BY
ARTHUR W. PINERO

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McC

IN CHANCERY.

Produced at the Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh, on September 19th, 1884, and afterwards played at the Gaiety Theatre, London, on December 24th, 1884, with the following cast :—

Characters.

CAPTAIN DIONYSIUS MCCAFFERTY.

(Formerly in the Ballytara

Militia, now proprietor of the

Railway Hotel, Steepleton

Junction) Mr. Alfred Bishop.

DR. TITUS (His medical attendant). Mr. Laye.

MONTAGUE JOLIFFE..... Mr. Edward Terry.

MR. HINXMAN..... Mr. John Dallas.

JOHN (Mrs. Smith's servant)..... Mr. Lyndall.

MR. BUZZARD (A Butcher)..... Mr. Guise.

MR. GAWGE (A Draper)..... Mr. Sherrard.

MRS. SMITH..... Miss Phyllis Broughton.

MRS. MARMADUKE JACKSON..... Miss Gladys Homfrey.

PATRICIA MCCAFFERTY..... Miss Maria Jones.

AMELIA ANNE BUZZARD..... Miss Oliver.

WALKER (Mrs. Smith's servant)... Miss Emma Broughton.

KITTLES.. Miss Clara Jecks.

IN CHANCERY.

ACT I.

DRAWING A BLANK.

The Parlour of the Railway Hotel at Steepleton Junction.

ACT II.

ARTIFICIAL MEMORY.

The Best Room in the Hotel.

ACT III.

HOME SWEET HOME.

Sitting room at Mrs. Marmaduke Jackson's, Gravesend.

Three Sundays elapse between ACTS I and II.

ACT II occurs on the morning and

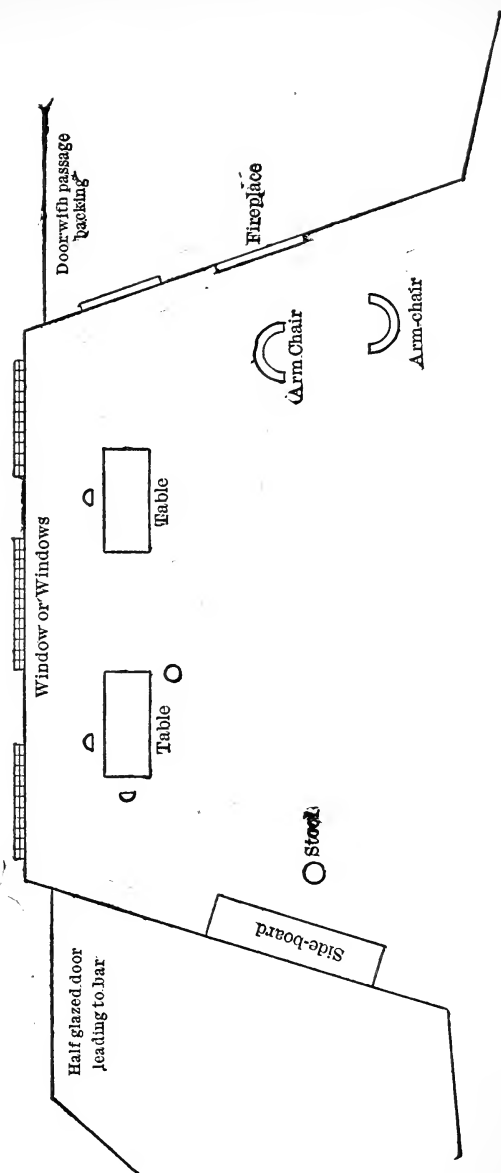
ACT III on the Evening of the same day.

IN CHANCERY

Act 1st

PLAN OF SCENE

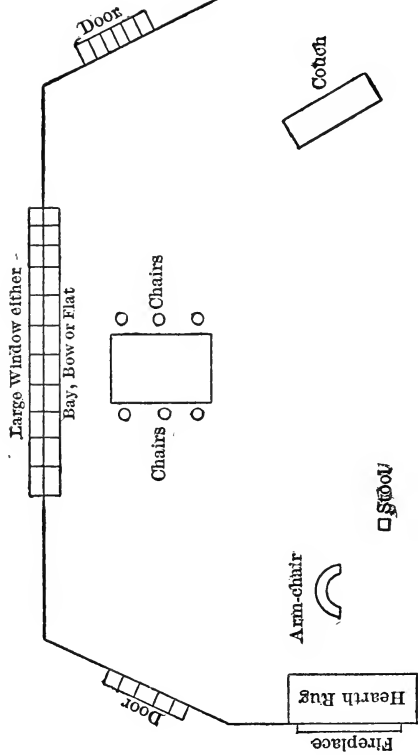
Country Prospect, Railroad in the Distance



IN CHANCERY

Act 2nd

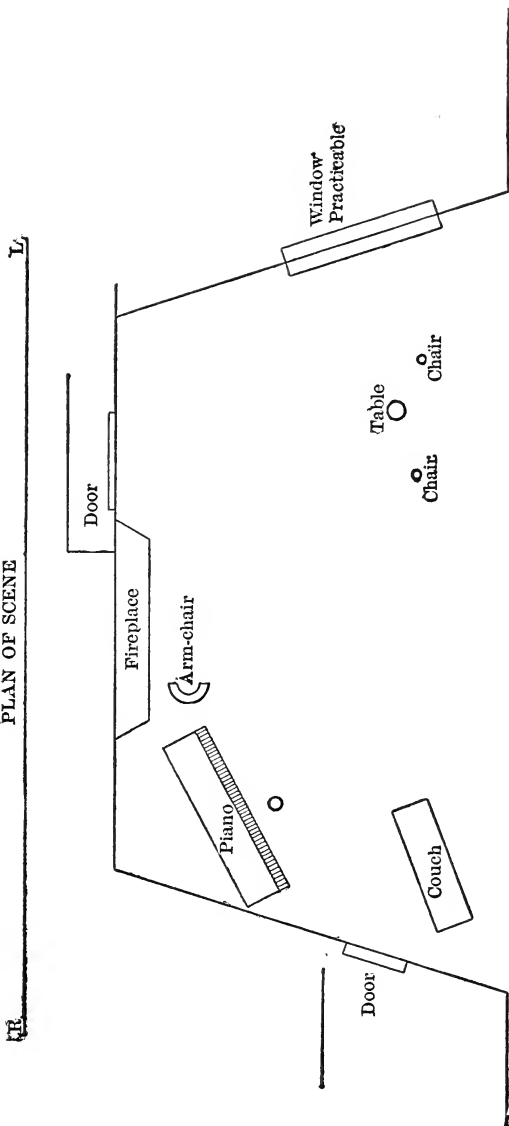
PLAN OF SCENE



IN CHANCERY

Act 3rd

PLAN OF SCENE



IN CHANCERY.

ACT I.

DRAWING A BLANK.

SCENE:—*The comfortable parlour of a small hotel. Up stage R. door leading to Bar. Up stage L. door with passage backing. At back large window or windows looking on to a country prospect with a railway, telegraph wires, etc. Up stage at back two small tables of equal size. Round table R. C. Three chairs round table L. C., two chairs placed as in plan. Down stage L. fire-place. Above fire-place, arm-chair, below fire-place, an ordinary chair. Down stage R. side-board with crockery, plate, etc., on side-board a work-basket with needle-work. By side-board a chair or stool, on table R. C. a cribbage board and cards, long clay pipes, matches, and a newspaper, on table L. C. pipes, newspapers and matches. The room generally furnished with all the characteristics of an Inn Parlour, stuffed birds, fishing rods and basket, a gun or two, sporting pictures, etc.*

Short lively music at opening. As the curtain rises the angry voice of McCafferty, accompanied by A small crash of broken crockery, is heard in the distance off L. PATRICIA enters door R. listening. PATRICIA is a buxom, brawny Irish woman—neatly dressed, but with a wild head of red hair.

PAT. My pa's in a queer temper by the sound of

it. (*she crosses to door L. and listens, McCafferty's voice rises higher*) There now, he's arguing them politics with poor Mr. Jolliffe. (*looking towards door R.*) Thank goodness, here's the gentlemen arriving. (*goes L.*)

(MR. GAWGE *enters door R., he is a thin man, almost entirely bald, with a treble voice.*)

MR. G. (*politely*) Good evening, Miss McCafferty. (*rubbing his hands heartily*) Any news, eh? Any news?

PAT. (L. C.) Good evening to ye, Mr. Gawge, there's nothing stirring.

MR. G. How's Captain McCafferty to-night?

(*There is another crash off L., MR. GAWGE'S manner changes to extreme timidity.*)

PAT. (*jerking her head towards L.*) I think he's just having a chat with Mr. Jolliffe, the gentleman stopping in the Hotel.

MR. G. Oh! (MR. GAWGE *goes up to table L. C. very quietly and nervously and sits behind the table.*) Ahum, yes. I'll take my usual, Miss McCafferty.

(PATRICIA *crosses to R. C., as MR. BUZZARD enters door R. MR. BUZZARD is a fat, red-faced man with bushy hair and gruff voice, the reverse of MR. GAWGE.*)

MR. B. (*jovially*) Good evening, Miss McCafferty, good evening, Mr. Gawge.

PAT. AND MR. G. Good evening, Mr. Buzzard.

MR. B. Any news, eh? Any news?

PAT. I believe not, sir.

MR. B. And how is your poor papa to-night?

(*Another distinct crash, MR. BUZZARD'S face changes, he stands rooted to the spot.*)

PAT. (*with a movement as before*) He's just havin' a little bit of a chat with Mr. Jolliffe, the gentleman stopping in the Hotel.

MR. B. (*nervously*) Oh! I think I'll take my usual, Miss McCafferty.

(PAT. *goes out door R.*, MR. BUZZARD *tiptoes up to the table R. C.*, and *sits behind it. He and MR. GAWGE load their long pipes gloomily.*)

MR. G. Captain seems a little wus than ordinary to-night, Mr. Buzzard, sir.

MR. B. He do. He do. Time Dr. Titus was here to keep him under.

MR. G. (*looking towards door*) Here is the Doctor.

(DR. TITUS *enters door R.*, *he is a middle-aged professional-looking person, with iron grey hair and whiskers. His attire is rather inclined to seediness, his manner pompous and bombastic.*)

TITUS. Good evening, gentlemen! (*crosses L. and puts hat on mantel-piece*)

MR. G. AND MR. B. Good evening, Doctor—good evening.

TITUS. (*bustling over to arm-chair*) How is Captain McCafferty to-night?

(MCCAFFERTY'S *voice heard outside.*)

MR. G. (*under his breath*) He's upstairs.

MR. B. (*under his breath*) With Mr. Joliffe.

MR. G. The gentleman staying in the hotel.

MR. G. AND MR. B. (*together*) Having a little bit of a chat.

TITUS. Oh, quite so, quite so.

(PAT. *enters door R.*, *carrying tray with glasses, etc. She gives MR. GAWGE and MR. BUZZARD their drinks.*)

TITUS. You're single-handed to-night, Miss McCafferty, where's the waiter?

PAT. He contradicted papa this afternoon.

MR. G. AND MR. B. (*together*) Oh!

PAT. So papa dismissed him through the window.

MR. G. AND MR. B. (*together*) Ah!

PAT. I'm so glad you've come, Doctor, and is it whiskey you'll take?

TITUS. (*politely*) It is whiskey.

PAT. Irish?

TITUS. Any whiskey would become Irish when dispensed by your fair hands.

PAT. Go on now. (*goes out door R., MR. GAWGE and MR. BUZZARD light their pipes*)

MR. G. This excitement is very bad for the Captain, ain't it, Doctor?

TITUS. Very, very.

MR. B. You might tell us how Captain McCafferty's ailment came about, Doctor—if it's no secret.

TITUS. (*standing on hearth-rug L. C.*) Certainly. My friend, I may say our friend—our host of the Railway Hotel at Steepleton was formerly a Captain in the distinguished Ballytara Militia. One of his brother officers, who was also a cheesemonger, thought it wise upon one occasion to wink at Mrs. McCafferty, the Captain's wife, now, alas, beyond the reach of all such advances.

MR. G. Dear me!

MR. B. Indeed!

TITUS. Captain McCafferty always, shall I say, a hasty man, dragged the offender to Belgium, where they fought a duel with pistols.

MR. G. AND MR. B. (*together*) Good gracious!

TITUS. I was the medical man concerned. In the result the Captain spoilt his opponent's new hat, while the cheesemonger contrived to lodge a bullet in the Captain's body.

MR. G. Mercy me!

MR. B. Well I never!

TITUS. Now, gentlemen, the whereabouts of that bullet has never been discovered. If it is still in Captain McCafferty's body, I say if that bullet is still in Captain McCafferty's body, the slightest excite-

ment such as would be produced by thwarting a fond wish or upsetting a cherished project, the slightest excitement might produce the most alarming results. Gentlemen, it is a most interesting case.

(MR. GAWGE and MR. BUZZARD wipe their foreheads nervously.)

MR. B. Most interesting, most interesting. Then you remain in Steepleton, Doctor, expressly to look after the Captain?

TITUS. Ahem! Captain McCafferty is good enough to appoint me his medical attendant.

MR. B. You're watching for the bullet, eh?

TITUS. I am watching for the bullet.

MR. G. Then if the bullet is ever discovered, you'll lose a very comfortable post, eh, Doctor? (*gets up and takes light from table R. C.*)

TITUS. (*drawing himself up*) Mr. Gawge!

MR. G. I beg your pardon, Doctor, no offence.

(MR. G. and MR. B. talk together, DR. TITUS turns from them and slyly produces a pocket-book from which he takes out a small leaden bullet.)

TITUS. (*aside, weighing the bullet in his hand*) But the bullet isn't likely to be discovered while it is in Bob Titus's pocket-book. (*He returns bullet to the pocket-book, and pocket-book to his pocket* *Aside*) Ahem! It is a most interesting case.

(PAT. enters door R., carrying tumbler of drink, which she gives to TITUS.)

PAT. Here ye are, Doctor.

(*Another distant crash is heard with MCCAFFERTY'S voice above it.*)

PAT. Keep your eyes on pa, Doctor, if he loses his temper he's done entirely.

MCC. (*outside*) What do you mean, Mr. Joliffe, sor, by regarding me in that manner with your eye, your wearing an impertinent look, sor.

PAT. He's coming.

(There is a general movement, the two men at the table bury their heads in their papers. TITUS sits in chair below fire-place L. PAT. runs to R. C. and sits, taking needlework from basket on side-board. CAPTAIN DIONYSIUS MCCAFFERTY with his hands in his pockets rushes in from door L. He is a fat, untidily-dressed, old man, with fiery face, red whiskers and bushy hair. His eyes are bolting from their sockets, and he is trembling with passion. He looks round fiercely as if seeking some excuse for an outburst, finding none he sinks into chair C.)

MCC. I wish a very good evening to all of ye.

MR. G. *(in a small voice over his paper)* Good evening, Capt. McCafferty.

(MCCAFFERTY turns upon him suddenly, MR. GAWGE disappears behind his newspaper.)

MR. B. *(over his paper)* Delighted to see you, Captain.

(MCCAFFERTY glares at him, he disappears like MR. GAWGE.)

MCC. *(to PAT.)* What are you doin', Pat, my darlin'?

PAT. Mendin' the white waistcoat ye tore up when you were a little put out last night.

TITUS. You've been agitating yourself again, Captain McCafferty.

MCC. No. I've not, Mr. Joliffe agitated me.

TITUS. Dear me, how?

MCC. He contradicted my assertion.

PAT. Oh, I'm sure you're mistaken, papa; what did Mr. Joliffe say?

MCC. He didn't say anything—he regarded me in a contradictory manner wid his eye. *(goes to her R.)*

TITUS. (*moving*) I'll speak to Mr. Joliffe, he'll explain everything satisfactorily, I'll be bound. (*goes to door, opens it and calls*) Mr. Joliffe! Mr. Joliffe!

JOL. (*in distance*) Yes?

TITUS. Step down and join us in the parlour, will you?

JOL. (*as before*) Oh yes, certainly.

(TITUS returns to his seat before fire L. as MONTAGUE JOLIFFE enters. He is a fair-haired individual, with a pale, anxious face, roving eyes and a large expanse of forehead.)

JOL. (*as he enters*) Delighted to make one, delighted to make one.

MR. G. AND MR. B. Good evening!

TITUS. Captain McCafferty is under the mistaken impression, Mr. Joliffe, that you contradicted some assertion he made.

PAT. (*appealingly*) Ah, now I'm sure Mr. Joliffe didn't, did ye, Mr. Joliffe?

JOL. (*shakes his head*) No!

McC. He contradicted me with a look of his eye.

JOL. Quite a mistake, quite a mistake; Captain McCafferty expressed his conviction that Steepleton, which at present boasts 98 inhabitants, an hotel, and a Railway Station, would in a short space of time become the centre of British commerce, with a Mayor, a town council and a Bishopric. In reply, I merely said. Oh!

McC. (*rising*) But you looked dubious, sor, knowing the precarious state of my health, you looked dubious.

JOL. I assure you Captain McCafferty, I didn't mean to.

McC. Very well then, I accept your apology, say no more.

JOL. But I assure—

McC. Say no more.

JOL. No, I can assure you—

McC. (*fiercely*) Say no more—(*turning to GAWGE and BUZZARD*) Gentlemen, we'll play with the cards—

MR. B. Well, Captain McCafferty, if I might suggest—

McC. Keep silent, sor, when I make a proposal. (*turning to GAWGE*) We'll play three handed crib.

(MR. GAWGE *moves timidly to chair at back of table*
R. C. MR. B. *to right of same table, they sit playing at table* R. C. PAT. *sits doing her needlework and watching them* R. JOLIFFE *sinks into chair*
L. C. *facing* TITUS.)

JOL. What a dreadful person.

TITUS. (*drawing nearer to JOL.*) Mr. Joliffe, you'll pardon my freedom, I hope, but will you allow me to put to you one little question?

JOL. Certainly, what is it?

TITUS. Now that you are completely recovered from your unfortunate railway accident, why do you remain in this wretched little town, in this equally wretched little inn, under the tyrannic rule of that despotic old ruffian?

JOL. Why? Ah!

TITUS. With a poor devil of a doctor without a practice it's different. I'm chained to Steepleton in attendance on old McCafferty. But you, you're a free man. Why not be up and away?

(JOLIFFE *draws himself up and takes* TITUS *by the sleeve and looks round mysteriously.*)

JOL. (*in a whisper*) Up and away, where to?

TITUS. To your relatives.

JOL. Where are they?

TITUS. Well then, to your friends.

JOL. Where are they?

TITUS. Oh dear, oh dear! Well then, to the town where you reside.

JOL. What town?

TITUS. (*getting irritated*) Confound it, man, why don't you return to the place you came from?

JOL. Where's that?

TITUS. (*loudly*) Why you never mean to say you don't know.

JOL. Hush—sh—sh—sh! (*beckons to TITUS to come nearer.*) Can I trust you, I wonder?

TITUS. That depends—are you a tailor?

JOL. I don't know, I mean will you keep my secret? A most awful, harrowing secret.

TITUS. My dear sir, I'm a doctor, of course I will.

JOL. Your word of honour?

TITUS. My word of honour!

JOL. I've been longing for a confidant, sit down.
(*They sit close together L. C.*)

MCC. (*playing up stage, violently*) What d'ye mean, sor? What d'ye mean?

MR. B. Well, Captain, I was thinking—

MCC. To the devil with your thinking.

PAT. Papa! papa! Keep calm!

TITUS. Gentlemen, gentlemen, don't agitate the Captain.

MCC. He corrected my countin', knowing the precarious state of my health, too, wid a bullet in me, he corrected my countin'.

MR. B. Well, well, I apologize.

MR. G. So do I.

MCC. Go on wid the amusement then, ye couple of blundering ignoramuses.

(*They resume playing.*)

JOL. What a dreadful person—what a dreadful person.

TITUS. Now, Mr. Joliffe, I'm your servant.

(*Soft music in orchestra.*)

JOL. (*solemnly*) Dr. Titus, you remember my being brought to the Railway Inn at Steepleton, don't you?

TITUS. Of course I do, six weeks ago.

JOL. Six weeks at Steepleton Junction. (*turning and pointing*) You can see the exact spot from that window. Two passenger trains came into violent collision. *Nothing resulted* but a few scratches and bruises and everybody was able after a *trifling delay*, to resume their journey, everybody with *one* important *exception*.

TITUS. Yourself.

JOL. (*myself*.) I was carefully deposited in the best bedroom of the Railway Hotel, where, owing to the assiduous nursing of that kind creature there, (*pointing to PAT.*) and the unremitting attention of Dr. Titus, (*taking TITUS's hand*) in three weeks I was on my legs again.

TITUS. As strong as a horse.

JOL. Strong as a tandem, never *was* better, at least I don't think I ever *was* better, but Dr. Titus, I don't remember.

TITUS. Don't remember?

JOL. No, I'm vigorous and hearty, can eat, drink and sleep, I'm well educated, can speak French, jabber a little German, know a phrase or two of Italian, and have a fair knowledge of music, but, Dr. Titus, ever since that little smash up at Steepleton Junction, I haven't the least idea who the devil I am, whence I came, or where I'm going.

TITUS. Good gracious, what's wrong?

(*Music stops.*)

JOL. My memory! My mind's a perfect blank as to the past, every incident of, I hope, my distinguished career previous to that railway accident has entirely left me.

TITUS. But you know your name.

JOL. (*producing card-case*) Yes, but only thro'

finding my card-case in my overcoat pocket. (*handing card to TITUS.*)

JOL. Here it is, Montague Joliffe, no address. M. J., No. 36 was marked on my collars, which leads me to hope I am a gentleman.

TITUS. Why?

JOL. Well, nobody but a gentleman would have 36 white three-fold linen masher collars.

TITUS. Well, this is another most interesting case! Have you searched all the directories?

JOL. (*with a look of horror*) No!

TITUS. Why not?

JOL. I'm afraid to.

TITUS. Nonsense! Do it at once. (*rises*)

JOL. No, no, no! I might turn out to be a party I don't like. I might have to follow a trade or profession I detest, or what is more awful, I might discover my profession without remembering how to practice it. I might find myself a colonel, who has forgotten his drill, a captain in the navy who knows nothing but how to be sea-sick, or a doctor who cannot remember the pharmacopœia. In short, I may be a soldier, sailor, apothecary, ploughboy or a thief.

TITUS. Ah, but on the other hand!

JOL. On the other hand, I may be the hero of the hour, the author of the latest craze in books, the new drawing-room tenor, or the fashionable tragedian. I may be an M. P., one of the Cabinet, or perhaps a member of the County Court. It's this that buoys me up. But Dr. Titus, I shan't be able to stand the uncertainty much longer. Give me your opinion. (*he rises and puts himself in studied position*) Now, what do you think I am?

TITUS. (*sitting, leaning back and surveying him*) A very lucky fellow.

JOL. Lucky?

TITUS. Certainly, why, it's as much as I can do

to forget a few tradesmen's bills. You want my advice?

JOL. Yes.

TITUS. Take it easy; accept your position. You'll never have so little anxiety as you have at the present moment. How old are you?

JOL. Don't know. What do you think? (*anxiously*) Think I'm a chicken?

TITUS. Well, you're in the prime of life, with no conscience to prick you on the score of past misdeeds, enjoy yourself, make merry, until your recollections return. (*rises, bus. chair*)

JOL. Oh, they will return then?

TITUS. Of course they will, all of a sudden, your case is no rarer in the annals of medicine than it is in fiction. When those two railway engines came together you experienced a shock?

JOL. I *did*.

TITUS. *That's the cause.*

(*Music as before.*)

One day without a moment's warning, like the bursting of a soap bubble in a man's ear, your memory will come back to you. The sight of somebody's ugly face, the sound of a familiar voice, the melody of a miserable comic song, or the air of a waltz from a discordant organ, and the rusty gates of the past will be opened. Like a flash of lightning you will regain the consciousness of cares and responsibilities, arrears of income-tax unpaid, and all the evils of a well-spent life. Be warned, don't seek to hasten matters, and in the meantime be happy.

(*Music ceases.*)

JOL. Happy, when I'm thrown a foundling on the mercy of that violent old Captain McCafferty. Dr. Titus, he's a demon.

TITUS. Well, he is a beast, but he's taken a fancy to you.

JOL. But I've no money.

TITUS. Don't ask for his bill.

JOL. But suppose *he* does.

TITUS. Then fly to her.

JOL. Her?

TITUS. My good sir! You're blind! Haven't you discovered?

JOL. What?

TITUS. Miss McCafferty, Patricia, your devoted nurse, she's lost her heart to you.

JOL. You don't say so?

TITUS. I do. You lucky devil. No past, and a nice comfortable snug future. How I envy you.

McC. I tell ye I've not lost the game.

MR. G. Well, but Captain McCafferty—

McC. Then some of ye have been putting my pegs back.

MR. G. AND MR. B. No, Captain, no—

McC. Putting my pegs back, and me in a delicate state of health.

TITUS. (*joining group at back*) Gentlemen, gentlemen, don't agitate the Captain.

(*JOLIFFE has seated himself in arm-chair L. C. PAT. crosses from R., and stands behind his chair.*)

PAT. How fine you're beginning to look, Mr. Joliffe dear.

JOL. Am I, Miss McCafferty?

PAT. Have done wid the *Miss* McCafferty. My name's Patricia and Pat's the short for it. Sure, I haven't fed ye on good calf's foot jelly, you at one end of the spoon and me at the other, to be called *Miss* McCafferty, now that you can feed without me.

JOL. Titus was right. (*to PAT.*) I'm very much obliged, Miss McCaff—Patricia.

PAT. (*smoothing his hair*) I combed your hair in the middle when I had the dressing of it, and pretty you looked. I suppose I shall never have the combin' of it again, at all, at all. (*sits R.*)

JOL. (*aside*) I should think Titus *was* right.

TITUS. (*going*) Gentlemen, who will join in a game of pyramids upstairs?

MR. G. I will

MR. B. So will I.

TITUS. Captain.

MCC. No, I've got a little private affair to talk over with Mr. Joliffe.

(TITUS, GAWGE and BUZZARD go off door L. JOLIFFE rises and is about to sneak away quietly.)

JOL. (*going* L.) I think I'll make one, Doctor, I think I'll make one.

(MCCAFFERTY takes his arm and brings him back.)

MCC. Didn't ye hear me say I'd got a little business wid ye?

JOL. *Beg pardon, beg pardon*, business is a pleasure.

MCC. (*sharply*) Eh!

JOL. I say business is a pleasure.

MCC. (*pointing to chair*) Sit down then.

(JOLIFFE sits nervously.)

MCC. Patricia, my darlin', retire to the bar till I call ye.

(PAT. rises and crosses to R. MCCAFFERTY detains her and embraces her, wiping his eyes with emotion.)

MCC. Ah, my little girl, is the time comin' when I've to share ye wid another man? Go, darlin'.

(PAT. goes out door R.)

JOL. (*aside*) I've a presentiment something dreadful is going to happen.

MCC. (*turning to JOL.*) Mr. Montague Joliffe, sor! You've been wid us, an occupant of the best bed-room at this Hotel, six weeks come yesterday. You were brought here flat on the broad of your

back, bruised and battered. You've been nursed by my own daughter and physicked by my own doctor, and have enjoyed all the advantages of my own personal society.

JOL. I'm sure I can never express my deep sense—

McC. Don't try, sor, when I'm in the middle of speaking—kindness is my disposition.

(He goes to side-board, is watched anxiously by JOL., and from a drawer takes out a number of long sheets of paper closely written upon, and fastened together in one corner.)

McC. On paper, sor, in plain pounds, shillings and pence, your visit to this establishment takes that figure. *(handing paper to JOLIFFE)* Mr. Joliffe, your bill, sor.

(JOLIFFE takes bill with a look of horror. MCCAFFERTY goes up to table R. C., and puts cards etc., in drawer.)

JOL. *(aside, weakly)* I was right, I was right. Something dreadful has happened. *(turning over the sheets one by one)* First week. Oh! Second week—gracious! Third week—goodness! Fourth week, nourishing food, oh, Christopher! Fifth week, wine, oh, Columbus! Sixth week, delicacies out of season—Ah! eh! ah! *(he collapses.)*

McC. *(standing over him)* What the devil's the meaning of the zoological sounds you're emitting, sor? Are you delighted with the moderation of your little account, or are ye not?

JOL. *(recovering)* Oh, delighted, delighted Captain McCafferty! Are you quite sure nothing has been left out? *(turning over leaves)* Where's the penny-worth of periwinkles I had for tea yesterday?

(MCCAFFERTY snatches the bill from him, and examines it violently.)

McC. How dare you give me a turn, and me in a delicate state of health. (*returning bill, and pointing out an item*) There it is before you.

JOL. Oh! of course. (*reading*) Periwinkles half-a-crown. Thank you, you haven't charged for the pin.

McC. No, sor.

(JOLIFFE *tries unsuccessfully to cram the account into his pocket.*)

JOL. (*holding them out to McCafferty*) There isn't a lift in the Hotel to take them up to my floor, is there?

McC. No, sor. Stop, I ought to tell you we take off 2½ per cent. to commercial travellers. Are you a commercial traveller?

JOL. (*rising aghast*) Am I a—what?

McC. A commercial traveller!

JOL. Ah! No—o—o! I don't think so.

McC. You don't think so!

JOL. I mean I don't remember being a commercial traveller.

McC. You don't remember!

JOL. *Just so, just so*, of course if a man is a commercial traveller, the chances are ten to one he knows it, aren't they?

McC. (*violently*) Why certainly, sor!

JOL. (*calming him*) *Just so, just so*, that's what I want to get at. No, don't think of taking off 2½ per cent.

McC. Then, Mr. Joliffe, if you're not a commercial traveller, what the devil are you?

JOL. (*his jaw dropping*) Eh, what am I?

McC. What are ye?

JOL. What—hold this for a moment, will you? It's rather heavy.

(JOLIFFE, *who has been nursing the bundle of papers like a baby, deposits it in the CAPTAIN'S arms.*)

JOL. (*wiping his brow*) Yes, of course, what am I?

McC. Yes, sor, what are you?

JOL. What am I?

McC. Yes, sir, what are *you*?

JOL. Oh, I'm a—I'm a gentleman.

McC. A gintleman, well, I'm glad of that. (*shaking JOLIFFE'S hand*) There's two of us. Now we shall get at what I'm driving at. You come of a good family, I take it?

JOL. Oh, yes. The, the, the Joliffes!

McC. Oh, the Joliffes!

JOL. Yes, the old Joliffes—the good old Joliffes.

McC. London boys?

JOL. Well, they're spread about, they're spread about, some here and some there.

McC. Are they rich?

JOL. No, that's the devil of it. (*putting hands into pockets*) All the Jolliffe I know is a pauper—I mean all the Joliffes I know are paupers. Fine, well-made, strapping fellows, but no money, no money.

McC. And you?

JOL. Oh, I'm a regular Joliffe.

McC. (*returning the bundle of papers quickly*) Take your bill. Now, sor, I've a communication to make to ye. Be seated.

(*They sit.* JOLIFFE L. C. McCAFFERTY brings chair c.)

JOL. (*aside*) Something else is going to happen.

McC. Mr. Montague Joliffe, you may have heard, sor, that I'm a man in a precarious state of health, wid a bullet in me somewhere or other, and where it is the devil only knows, for the doctor does not.

JOL. Yes, I've heard that once or twice before.

McC. Ye may have heard also that the slightest agitation or excitement may make an angel of me.

JOL. (*dubiously*) Well, I'm not prepared to pledge—

McC. (*violently*) None of your dirty dubious looks, sor! Yes or no?

JOL. Yes. (*quickly*.)

McC. Very well, then. Now, sor, I'm desirous of settling the future of this wonderful property, the Steepleton Railway Hotel, by way of selecting a gentleman to succeed the present proprietor now before ye, and, sor after looking on all sides of me, my choice has fallen upon you.

JOL. But, Captain McCafferty, I've no capital.

McC. Stop, I'm comin' to that.

JOL. Are you? I'm glad of that.

McC. I don't deny that I should have preferred ye wid capital, but as you're a pauper, I must take ye as ye are.

JOL. (*attempting to rise*) But, Captain McCafferty—

McC. (*pushing him back*) Sit down, Mr. Joliffe, sor. You may have observed that my little girl has taken a strong liking for ye.

JOL. Your—*little* girl!

McC. My daughter, Patricia.

JOL. Really, Captain, I don't think—(*rising*.)

McC. (*violently*) Don't contradict me, sor, when you know the doctor forbids it! I say, sor, that my little girl is pining for ye! Why, sor, she's the *shadow* of what she was a month ago.

JOL. You *don't* say so.

McC. But I *do* say so. (*excitedly slapping his knees at each sentence*) And I *say*, sor, that Dionysius McCafferty has made up his mind that the banns shall go up next *Sunday* for your weddin' wid the best little girl that ever drew breath in the parlour, or *beer* in the bar. (*rising*) Give me your hand, Mr. Joliffe you're in luck, sor! (*puts chair back B.*)

JOL. (*rising*) But, Captain McCafferty—

McC. (*turning*) Well, sor!

JOL. Suppose I've got a wife already.

McC. What?

JOL. Suppose I've got a wife already.

McC. (*in a rage*) What! Do you mean to say you've crawled into my house and stolen the heart of my little girl, whilst you've got a wife waitin' for your home comin'.

JOL. (*alarmed*) Don't excite yourself, Captain, don't excite yourself, think of the bullet.

McC. (*sinking into chair R.*) Viper! You've done for me, viper!

JOL. Captain McCafferty, don't excite yourself, I didn't say I was married.

(McCAFFERTY *groans.*)

On the contrary, I don't think I am married.

McC. What do you mean, you blackguard.

JOL. I mean, I don't remember ever marrying anybody.

McC. (*jumping up*) Don't remember!

JOL. You see if a man is married the chances are ten to one he knows it, ain't they?

McC. When I was married I knew it!

JOL. Just so, just so, that's what I want to get at, that's what I want to get at.

McC. (*panting*) Ugh, what a shock you gave me! Bless you, my boy. I'll call my little girl, and you shall make her a happy creature with the good news.

JOL. Wait a minute, wait a minute.

(McCAFFERTY *goes to door R., opens it and calls.*)

McC. Patricia, Pat, come here.

JOL. (*hysterically*) What am I going to do! What am I going to do! Oh, if I only could remember.

(PAT. *enters door R. McCAFFERTY embraces her.*)

McC. Pat, my darlin', the blow has dropped on me! I've got to share ye wid another man. Go to

him, there he stands—your own lawful husband that is to be.

(PATRICIA crosses to JOLIFFE.)

PAT. (*bashfully*) Montague!

JOL. (*in a daze*) P—P—Patricia.

(*They embrace.*)

PAT. Ah thin! I shall comb your hair agin for you after all.

(*She leads him over to R., she sitting. McCafferty goes to door L. and calls.*)

MCC. Doctor, come down! Mr. Gawge, Mr. Buzzard, sors, come down!

(TITUS, GAWGE and BUZZARD enter quickly door L.)

TITUS, MR. G. AND MR. B. Well, Captain, what is it.

MCC. Mr. Joliffe has proposed for my little girl and I've consented.

(McCafferty L. C. TITUS, GAWGE and BUZZARD gather round JOLIFFE and PAT. congratulating them noisily.)

MR. B. Congratulate you, Mr. Joliffe.

MR. G. You're a lucky man, sir.

TITUS. (*aside to JOLIFFE*) You've taken the doctor's advice then, lucky devil.

(GAWGE and BUZZARD resume their places behind table as before. TITUS goes up L. C., a bell rings off R.)

MCC. What's that?

PAT. The post, I fancy, wid the London papers.

(*She bustles off R. McCafferty crosses to JOLIFFE.*)

MCC. Ah, my boy! It's not a penniless bride ye take to your heart, for I've made up my mind to settle upon my daughter the sum of what's the amount of your bill? (*takes bill from under JOLIFFE's arm.*) Total £168—5—10. That's the exact amount I mean

to settle on my daughter, so to the devil wid the bill.
(Throwing away bill, and grasping JOLIFFE's hand.)
 Consider you've got the money. Heaven prosper you.
(Music) *(PATRICIA enters with 6 London papers.)*

PAT. The London papers.

(McCAFFERTY takes three, throws one to GAWGE, one to TITUS, who has dropped into chair L., and sits L. C. keeping remaining one. PAT. gives one to BUZZARD and one to JOL., who brings chair and sits C., retaining one herself, sitting R. They all simultaneously open the papers, turn them twice, and begin reading greedily. Music. Mysterious and melodramatic played piano. After a short pause JOLIFFE utters a cry of horror, he looks round and seeing that no one is looking at him, reads.)

JOL. Ah! *(looking round reading)* "£200 reward, absconded about six weeks ago, Montague Joliffe, fair, slim, about five feet ten inches in height. The above reward will be paid on application to Messrs. Screw and Patchett, Solicitors, "Grays Inn." Montague Joliffe, that's my name! Fair, I'm fair! Slim, I'm slim! 5 feet 10 inches in height, that's my measure. I'm a criminal, I'm a criminal!

(They all look up from their papers in astonishment.)

ALL. *(loudly)* What's the matter?

(Music quickens.)

(Beginning with PATRICIA, JOLIFFE goes from one to the other snatching the newspapers.)

JOL. Don't read the papers, don't read the papers, don't read the papers.

(ALL rise in confusion. JOLIFFE sinks into chair C., with newspapers under his arm. Music swells loudly as Curtain falls. Quick Curtain.)

BUZZARD

JOLIFFE

GAWGE

PAT.

McCAFFERTY

TITUS



ACT II.

ARTIFICIAL MEMORY.

SCENE:—*The best room of the Hotel, at back c., a large window looking out on to sky prospect, with the tops of some distant trees R. and L. Up stage and facing each other, doors set obliquely. Down stage R.,—fireplace. Before fireplace, an arm-chair and footstool, on the arm-chair, a loose cushion, under which some newspapers are concealed. A hearth-rug to be raised, showing some newspapers under it. Down stage L. c., a couch. Up stage c., a large dining table, laid for wedding breakfast, with glass, plate, flowers, etc., etc. In the centre of the table, a large wedding cake. Decanters of spirit, etc. Seven or eight chairs round the table. Inside door R. lock and key, outside door L. lock and key, practicable (most important. Articles of furniture, pictures, portraits, etc., to fill spaces.*

See plan of Scene.

(*Mendelsohn's wedding march at rise of curtain. McCafferty enters door R., carrying two bottles of champagne. McCafferty is in resplendent attire, dressed in all the colours of the rainbow, and wearing a large wedding favour; he deposits the wine upon the table.*)

McC. Phew! It's a mighty good job that my little girl's not married every day of my life, what with the wedding breakfast, my wines and spirits, to say nothing of supplying the bridegroom with a trousseau as well as the bride. (*a knock at door R.*) Come in now.

(*Mr. Hinxman enters, carrying a glass of grog. A rather shabby looking person, with a sharp enquiring manner.*)

HINX. I'm afraid I'm intruding.

McC. I'll tell ye that when I know who ye are.

HINX. My name's— (*checking himself*) er—
Simpson. I arrived at Steepleton late last night,
having a look round on railway business.

McC. Oh, I remember ye comin'.

(McCAFFERTY *busies himself at table*, HINXMAN
comes down R., places grog on mantelpiece.)

HINX. Got a wedding on here to-day, I hear?

McC. My little girl's to be sacrificed.

HINX. Who's the happy man?

McC. D'ye mean the bemaddening idiot she's
wasted her young affections on?

HINX. I mean the bridegroom.

McC. His name, bad luck to him is Joliffe, Mr.
Montague Joliffe.

(HINXMAN *starts, takes out pocket-book and makes
notes.*)

HINX. (*aside*) That's my man! I thought I was
on the right track. (*to McCAFFERTY, with assumed
indifference*) A resident here, I suppose?

McC. No, a stranger, came here from the devil
knows where, about a couple of months ago.

HINX. (*writing again*) I've got him, I've got
him, or my name's not James Hinxman, and going
to commit bigamy, too, is he? Oh! this'll make a
pretty case—this will. (*pockets note-book and turns
as McCAFFERTY comes down.*)

HINX. I should like to join the wedding party,
Captain McCafferty, if you've no objection?

McC. Well, you'll join it if you pay your dam-
age: the more the wretcheder.

(MR. GAWGE and MR. BUZZARD *bustle in door R.,
gaudily dressed and wearing wedding favours.*)

MR. G. AND MR. B. (*together*) Here we are,
Captain, here we are. (*coming c.*)

McC. Here ye are, here ye are! D'ye think I can't see ye? You're visible to the naked eye, I can tell you, and about an hour too soon, both of ye.

Mr. G. Better too soon, than too late, Captain.

McC. (*angrily*) Don't dictate to me, sor, on an anxious occasion like the present.

Mr. B. Beg pardon, Captain, may we have a peep at the bride?

McC. Well, your daughter Amelia Anne is a-dressin' of her.

(*Goes to door and calls. MR. GAWGE and MR. BUZZARD go up and inspect the table.*)

McC. Patricia! Pat! Come down and show yourself if you're dacent.

(*He turns and sees GAWGE and BUZZARD inspecting table.*)

McC. (*sharply*) Mr. Gawge! Mr. Buzzard! Sors, you'll not touch the meal now till the melancholy time arrives.

(*PAT. enters door L., attended by AMELIA ANN BUZZARD. MISS BUZZARD is dressed in a very old maidish style, quite a contrast to PAT. PATRICIA is dressed in bridal white and orange blossoms.*)

PAT. Here I am, papa.

McC. (*proudly*) Here she is, gintlemen, and it's something more than parental pride when I say, mind your eyesight! (*To HINXMAN, who is standing on hearthrug down R.*) Mr. Simpson, my daughter. (*HINXMAN bows to PAT.*) and sivin shillings a yard is the dress she's standing in.

PAT. Oh, pa, how can you expose me to such an ordeal?

HINX. This is an unexpected pleasure, Captain McCafferty. I suppose I shall have the pleasure of making the acquaintance of Mr. Joliffe by-and-bye!

MR. B. He was sittin' in the passage, with his 'ed agin the wall, as we come along.

McC. Then why the devil didn't ye bring him along wid ye? You're his best man, aren't you? Fetch him here now.

MR. G. AND MR. B. Certainly, Captain, certainly.

(BUZZARD and GAWGE bustle out door R.)

PAT. Papa, is it *commy fo* that we should meet?

McC. And is it *commy fo* that the father-in-law should provide the bridegroom with a trousseau, to say nothing of pocket-money into the bargain?

(BUZZARD and GAWGE re-enter with JOLIFFE.

JOLIFFE is in wedding clothes, looking exceedingly anxious and unwell. He glances round wildly.)

JOL. Good evening.

McC. It's morning, you aggravating imbecile.

PAT. Papa!

JOL. (*solemnly*) It's evening if you haven't been to bed all night. Where's Dr. Titus? I wish to consult Dr. Titus.

McC. He'll be here by-and-bye; what do ye require?

JOL. I want a sleeping draught. I think a little nap. (*Seeing BUZZARD on his left.*) What are you, when the time comes?

MR. B. Oh, I'm the best man!

JOL. (*looking him up and down*) The very best man? (BUZZARD *nods assent.*) Thank you—the arrangements are splendid. (*seeing GAWGE on R.*) You are the second best man, I suppose?

MR. G. Yes, yes, I suppose so.

JOL. Thank you, the arrangements are magnificent.

(GAWGE and BUZZARD both go up R. of table, JOLIFFE sees HINXMAN.)

JOL. I beg pardon, I don't know you, do I?

HINX. Mr. Simpson. Captain McCafferty has asked me to the wedding.

JOL. How nice! Are there any more coming up? (*coming c. aside*) What am I going to do? I know I'm a criminal, but am I a married criminal? Oh! if I could only remember!

(*He goes up to table, takes up a decanter of spirits, and tries to pour some into glass, rattling the decanter against the glass in his agitation.*)

MCC. (*taking decanter from him*) No, you'll not! you'll not touch the refreshment till the melancholy time arrives.

(*JOLIFFE and MCCAFFERTY expostulate with each other up stage. HINX., down R., refers to his note-book.*)

HINX. (*aside*) That's my man, I'll bet a pony. I wish I hadn't lost that there photo of Montague Joliffe. I've wired to town for another, and must wait till it comes. But this chap answers the description. Fair, he's fair. Slim, he's slim. Five foot ten inches in height, that's about his measure—and going to commit bigamy, too, are you, Mr. Joliffe? (*looking him up and down*) Well, you look as if you was a-going to commit everything, Mr. Joliffe. (*returns note-book to pocket*) But I don't take my eye off you till I get that other photo from town, and chance it.

MCC. (*coming down with JOLIFFE*) And there ye are, standin' shakin' like the tail of a pig, and ye haven't kissed your bride on the weddin' morning. Is it behaviour? (*shaking his fist at JOLIFFE*) I wish my state of health would permit me to lose my temper wid ye.

JOL. I was about to do it. I was about to do it. (*MISS BUZZARD and PAT. rise. JOLIFFE crosses to them and distractedly embraces MISS BUZZARD; both ladies utter small screams.*)

MCC. What are ye doin'? What are ye doin'? You're kissing the wrong woman.

JOL. A mistake, a mistake! (*Kisses PATRICIA.*)

MR. B. (*indignantly*) Kissing my daughter, Mr. Joliffe! You forget yourself, sir.

JOL. (*throwing up his arms*) I should think I do.

McC. Take him away! Take him away and put him somewhere till the time comes to make him my relative. Take him away!

JOL. I'd rather explain, I'd rather explain.

(*GAWGE and BUZZARD take hold of him on each side and he is borne out door R.—MCCAFFERTY following, gesticulating violently.*)

HINX. Hallo! This won't do; I mustn't lose sight of my man till I get that photo from town. (*to the ladies*) Servant, ladies. (*He goes out door R.*)

(*PAT. rises and crosses to table c.*)

PAT. I'm sure papa's too hard on Montague; it's a confusin' time for him. Gintlemen aren't getting married every day of their lives. (*simpering*) Not to me, at any rate. (*at chair R.*)

MISS B. (*gloomily*) No, nor to me either. (*going to window c.*)

PAT. (*listening*) What's that down below, dear?

(*MISS B. runs to window and looks out.*)

MISS B. Some arrivals from the Railway Station. A young lady with two servants, a man servant and a maid. Gracious! Here's fashion!

PAT. O, bother 'em! Coming here on my marriage day, and nobody to look after the kitchen but the bride. (*crossing to the door*) I hope pa will have the good sense to shut the door on 'em. Come along, dear, and help me to put on my veil.

MISS B. Yes, dear, with pleasur.

(*PAT. goes out door L., followed by MISS B. As they leave, the door R. opens and JOLIFFE re-enters stealthily, closing the door behind him.*)

JOL. I've given my best man the slip and stolen

away. If I could only reflect coherently on my position, but such a dreadful headache has come on. (*crosses and sits on sofa L. C., leaning his head on his hands*) Oh, if I hadn't committed that dreadful crime—whatever it was—and knew who I was, wouldn't I make the railway company pay for this? (*Unperceived by JOLIFFE, HINXMAN returns quietly door R.*)

HINX. What's my man up to now? (*hiding behind window curtains*) If he'd only say or do something to identify himself, I'd whip him off to a magistrate in a jiffy.

JOL. (*aside*) If I had sufficient courage to fly, where could I find a shelter—even a cabman's shelter? No, Steepleton is my only chance of safety—nobody comes to Steepleton unless they're left there by a railway accident. If I went to some busier spot, I should be arrested for that dreadful crime I've committed. Oh, how could I have done that dreadful deed—whatever it was? I wonder whether I was a hardened criminal or only a victim of a sudden temptation. I do hope—I do hope I wasn't a mean thief. I should despise myself if I'd been guilty of a nasty little paltry misdemeanour. (*rising*) No, I hope it was a skilful, dexterous forgery, or a brilliant, audacious embezzlement. Oh! fancy, I shall never be able to write my recollections.

(*crosses B. C.* HINXMAN *puts his head out from curtains.*)

HINX. What's he muttering about?

JOL. (*sitting in arm-chair*) And now, am I or am I not about to perpetrate a bigamy? (*wiping his eyes*) Poor Patricia, I shouldn't like to deceive her. She's a large-minded woman, large-minded and large-hearted. Great woman altogether. No, I don't think I can be a married man; if I'd been married, I should never have committed that dreadful crime,

unless it was for the sake of a starving wife and family. (*rising quickly*) No, I must risk it, I must risk it. Marriage is my only chance of self-preservation; after the ceremony McCafferty is bound to protect his boy, his son-in-law. Oh, the difficulty I've had to conceal the offers of reward for my apprehension, at the present moment there are three weeks' daily papers, concealed all over the Hotel.

(*He lifts up the cushion of the chair in which he has been sitting. Under the cushion there is a quantity of newspapers*)

Little does old McCafferty suspect the volcano upon which he sits.

(*Goes to hearthrug and gingerly lifts up the corner, a heap of newspapers is strewn under the rug.*)

(*McCAFFERTY'S voice is heard without, off R.*)

McC. Step this way, man, and mind the stairs.

JOL. McCafferty, McCafferty, is my time come? (*crosses L.*) I'll go and put my head in cold water. Oh, if I could only forget to take it out again. (*goes out L. door*)

HINX. (*coming from behind curtain*) This chap's conscience is a-pricking of him—to judge by his antics. (*looking towards door L.*) He can't get out this side of the house, but I'll keep my eye on him. I'll keep my eye on him.

(*He goes off door L. As he leaves, McCAFFERTY enters followed by MRS. SMITH, JOHN and WALKER.*)

MRS. SMITH is a young and pretty girl in an elegant travelling dress. WALKER is a neatly attired, good-looking maid, and JOHN a very superior, smart, man-servant, tall, fair and slim. WALKER carries some hand-bags and JOHN the wraps)

McC. You'll not find a better apartment in any hotel in Europe, anywhere.

MRS. S. Thank you, this will do. I am on my way to the North and wish to break the terribly long journey by remaining here to-night.

MCC. Well, you'll do as you like, but take notice that the railway train will be a paradise to what this hotel will be for the next dozen hours or more.

MRS. S. Good gracious!—what do you mean?

MCC. I mean that there's a wedding going on here.

MRS. S. A wedding! Who's wedding?

MCC. The weddin' of my little girl with the bemaddening idiot she's in love wid.

MRS. S. (*delighted*) A wedding! Oh, how romantic! Isn't it, Walker?

WALK. Yes, Ma'am.

MRS. S. (*turning to JOHN with a sigh*) Fancy, John, a wedding.

JOHN. Yes, ma'am.

MCC. And it's here that the gorging will be done, so if you'll take my advice you'll go below while they're a-doin' it.

MRS. S. (*clapping her hands*) Oh no, do let me remain here and watch the festivities, do Mr.—Mr. O'Flaherty.

MCC. (*indignantly*) Captain McCafferty, madam!

MRS. S. Captain McCafferty, do let me stay. I've never seen an Irish wedding.

MCC. (*beside himself*) An *Irish* weddin'. And what's the difference between—

MRS. S. Oh, no, none I'm sure, none, none.

MCC. Very well then, very well. (*giving keys to Walker*) No. 5, No. 8 and No. 16 are your rooms above. There are the keys, the locks are out of order. (*muttering*) Irish weddin' indeed! (*to MRS. SMITH*) What name?

MRS. S. Smith.

MCC. (*with contempt*) Schmidt.

MRS. S. Mrs. Smith.

MCC. (*turning to go*) Schmidt, well I've never

seen an Italian before. (*indignantly*) Irish weddin', indeed!

(*He goes out R., banging the door after him, MRS. S. laughs heartily.*)

MRS. S. Ha, ha! what an extraordinary person. Walker, run upstairs and see what my room is like. John shall go to the Station for the luggage.

WALK. Yes, ma'am.

(*WALKER places hand-bag on sofa and goes out door L., directly she has gone, MRS. SMITH and JOHN exchange looks then walk tiptoe, MRS. SMITH to door L., JOHN to door R., they open the doors, then listen for a moment, and then close the doors quietly, they then return quickly to C., where MRS. SMITH throws herself into JOHN'S arms.*)

MRS. S. Oh, Montague, Montague, Montague!

JOHN. My own, dear, precious little wife!

MRS. S. Oh, Montague, when shall I be able to be my real self? (*going to sofa*) I long to throw off this disguise and be to the world what I really am, Mrs. Montague Joliffe the wife of the dearest fellow in the world. (*gets to JOHN, takes his hand and lays her head on his shoulder, then returns to sofa.*)

JOHN. Oh, Melina darling! I too long to throw aside this wretched disguise and be myself again, Montague Joliffe, the husband of the best little wife in the world. But darling, every newspaper, day after day contains the offer of a reward for my discovery.

MRS. S. I know, I know! You don't think that Walker, my new maid, suspects anything.

JOHN. No, why should she?

MRS. S. Oh, what a honeymoon for two young people. (*sits on sofa*) Fetch the luggage from the Station, dear.

JOHN. (*with disgust*) More porters. (*goes to* ..

door and returns to c.) My honeymoon is made up of calling cabs, taking tickets, carrying luggage and every menial occupation under the sun, and I'm worse off than a real servant.

MRS. S. Oh, Montague!

JOHN. I am, *real* servants get tips, I don't.

(MRS. S. *rises and crosses, embracing him again*)

MRS. S. Well then, here's a tip for you, my poor dear martyr. (*kissing him*)

(WALKER ENTERS *door L., unperceived by them, sees them embrace and utters scream. THEY separate in confusion*)

WALKER. Well, I never!

MRS. S. Oh, dear, oh dear, you—you, you came in without knocking.

WALK. Really, ma'am, I must ask to leave you at once. In all my old families, the men-servants have always been the maids' perquisites.

JOHN. (R. C.) Be silent!

MRS. S. This is my husband.

WALKER. A lady married a man!

MRS. S. Well, what should a lady marry?

WALKER. I mean a servant man. No wonder I've never had any attention from him.

JOHN. My good woman, I am not a man-servant. I am merely assuming the character of one, and now that you are assured of that fact, you can go about your business.

MRS. S. (*going to WALKER*) Oh no, Walker, don't leave me in my great difficulties, you're a good-hearted woman, I know, and I'll confide in you. Have patience, Montague dear!

(JOHN *sits in arm-chair R. C.* MRS. SMITH *sits on cushion at his feet.* WALKER *stands by c., with arms folded*)

MRS. S. Walker, have you ever known anybody in Chancery?

WALK. Yes, ma'am, I have, my brother had a fight with a milkman.

MRS. S. No, no; do you know what a Ward is?

WALK. A sick ward, ma'am?

JOHN. (*dolefully*) She takes us for a work-house.

MRS. S. (*tenderly*) It's only because we are a union. Yes, Walker, I am a sick ward, a heartsick ward. Walker, I'm what they call a ward of court, one of the Lord Chancellor's young ladies, you know, and I daren't marry without the approval of the Vice Chancellor and the consent of my trustees, Major Gamboil and Admiral Turvey, and I have married without anybody's consent or approval at all, and oh, Walker, they're trying to take my dear husband from me, and to put him into prison to make door-mats. (*crying*) And we're both very young—and we couldn't bear it—and oh! Walker, how would you like it yourself?

(MRS. S. *bursts into tears; JOHN soothes and embraces her.*)

WALK. (*sympathetically*) Well, ma'am, of course I didn't know when I saw you kissing master! Bless him, I've often had the mind to do it myself.

MRS. S. Walker!

WALK. Well, Ma'am, I didn't know that he was your dear, good, husband, and a gentleman, and I couldn't think of leaving you, but what will you do if they catch him? (*crying*) And where are you off to now, ma'am?

MRS. S. To an old Hydropathic Establishment in Pitlorhin, where we think no one would dream of looking for us, we tried to get there about two months ago, but we both met with a horrible shaking in a railway accident at this very Junction.

JOHN. A shocking railway accident, we were thrown into each other's arms.

MRS. S. (*to WALKER*) Yes, and that was not the worst of it.

JOHN. (*to MRS. S.*) No dear, that was the best of it.

MRS. S. In the collision, Mr. Joliffe lost his overcoat and his card case, that's why we have changed our name, in case the loss should put the police on his track. There, run along downstairs, my good Walker, and see if there is any chance of our getting something to eat!

WALK. Yes, ma'am, that I will. (*crossing to door R.*) Eat! There, I feel I could swallow the master to keep him out of sight!

(*WALKER goes out door R. as HINXMAN enters door L. unnoticed by JOHN and MRS. SMITH.*)

HINX. (*aside*) My man's a-soaking of his head. I wonder whether there's another post in from Town yet? (*seeing MRS. SMITH and JOHN*) Hullo! More wedding guests, I suppose?

MRS. S. (*turning and seeing him*) I beg your pardon.

HINX. I beg yours, ma'am, I was just going downstairs to—

(*seeing MRS. SMITH's face, he starts back with a cry of surprise*)

HINX. Excuse me, mum.

(*He takes out a pocket-book, and out of book a photo, which he rapidly compares with MRS. SMITH's face*)

HINX. Right! By Jingo Yours is too pretty a face to be mistook, even when seen in a photo: Mrs. Montague Joliffe, I'm pleased to meet you, ma'am.

(*MRS. SMITH and JOHN utter a suppressed cry but otherwise retain their composure.*)

MRS. S. (*faintly*) Who—who are you, sir?

HINX. Hinxman—Mr. James Hinxman, a private enquiry officer, in connection with Scotland Yard. I'm employed by your guardians, Major Gamboil and Admiral Turvey, to discover the whereabouts of Mr. Montague Joliffe who is wanted for contempt for marrying a ward of court.

(JOHN comes quickly between MRS. S. and HINXMAN.)

JOHN. Then let me tell you, Mr. James Hinxman, if you don't instantly quit this room, I shall take you by the scruff of the neck and break a window with you.

HINX. Hallo! Who's this?

JOHN. (*advancing*) Who am I?

MRS. S. (*grasping the situation*) Oh, that—that is John Chorley, my servant, he is a very faithful fellow—but who—occasionally forgets his place. Go away, John, and don't interfere.

(JOHN looks from one to the other, then retires up quickly.)

MRS. S. (to HINXMAN) And now, sir, what do you want with me?

HINX. To bring you face to face with your husband. Your following your good gentleman to Steepleton gives me the one remaining proof I wanted. And a nice little game you've caught him up to, now you have found him. (He goes up to door laughing and calls) Here, Mr. Joliffe, Mr. Montague Joliffe, you're wanted.

(JOHN has come down R. C.—R. of MRS. SMITH.)

JOHN. (*aside to MRS. SMITH*) What?

MRS. S. (*aside to JOHN*) Hush! be quiet!

HINX. Mr. Joliffe, you're wanted.

JOHN. (*aside to MRS. SMITH*) What's the meaning of this?

MRS. S. Wait and see.

HINX. You're wanted.

JOL. (*outside*) Want me, want me?

(JOLIFFE *enters slowly door L. His hair is lank and damp, and he is mopping his forehead with his handkerchief.*)

HINX. Yes, I've got a pleasant little surprise for you.

JOL. Surprise?

HINX. Yes, here's your good lady.

JOL. My what?

HINX. Your wife, Mrs. Montague Joliffe, come all the way to Steepleton to find you.

(HINXMAN *pushes him over to Mrs. S. and sits on sofa L. C. rubbing his hands triumphantly. JOLIFFE stands bewildered.*)

JOL. My wife, my wife. (*gazing at Mrs. S. and advancing slowly*) M—Mrs. Joliffe!

MRS. S. (*commanding herself*) Mrs. Joliffe!

JOL. My wife! (*pulling himself together*) Had any difficulty in finding me, (*enquiringly*) Maria?

HINX. (*rising*) Maria, be blowed! Look here, Mr. Joliffe, its no use your trying to gammon me. You'd better look things straight in the face. My name's Hinxman, I'm a detective, I'm after you, and you know well what for.

JOL. (*makes a move to HINX—enquiringly*) What?

HINX. You've married Miss Mellina Summers, a ward of Chancery, without the consent of the court, Major Gamboil and Admiral Turvey, the young lady's guardians, and that's the long and short of it, now then!

(JOLIFFE *has been listening very attentively to every word, utters a sigh of relief.*)

JOL. Oh! that's what I've been up to. (*sticks his fingers in his waistcoat, and walks up and down*

stage beside himself with delight. Digging himself in the ribs) Artful devil, gay dog! Regular Joliffe. (*digging HINXMAN in the ribs, HINXMAN remonstrates—they talk together.*)

JOHN. (*aside to MRS. SMITH*) What does all this mean?

MRS. S. (*aside to JOHN*) The man's evidently an impostor, who has taken your name to screen himself. Be silent, it may save us.

JOL. (*to HINXMAN*) Then there's no forgery or embezzlement in the case.

HINX. Well, not in my instructions.

JOL. (*Indignantly*) Of course there isn't, sir, you'd better be careful what you insinuate. (*turning to MRS. S., who is standing R. C. in wonderment*) Well, Mellina dear, how I have been expecting you, Mellina.

(*JOLIFFE holds out his arm to MELLINA, who shrinks back, while JOHN utters an exclamation of indignation.*)

MRS. S. Be quiet—you'll betray yourself.

JOL. (*dropping his arms uneasily*) Don't be annoyed, Mellina, I can explain—

HINX. (*laughing*) Ha! ha! ha!

JOL. I left you, Mellina, about two months ago, wasn't it, Mellina?

MRS. S. Yes, you know it was. (*goes and faces him.*)

JOL. Yes, I know, I know it was. I tore myself from your side because I—you—we—they—you know why, Mellina. Then I had a nasty accident, and couldn't hold my pen. How I have missed you, Mellina.

MRS. S. (*frightened but conquering herself*) In—Indeed!

JOL. (*genially*) And how are things at home? Old place looking just the same?

MRS. S. Just the same.

JOL. I'm rather curious to see how the old place is looking.

MRS. S. I—I—dare say.

JOL. Well, we've got ourselves into a nice scrape, haven't we, Mellina. I suppose Major—(*turning to HINXMAN.*)

HINX. Gamboil.

JOL. Yes, Gamboil and Admiral—(*turning to HINXMAN.*)

HINX. Turvey.

JOL. Turvey, yes, are in a frightful rage.

MRS. S. Awful.

JOL. I always hated those two old boys.

HINX. Old! They're not old.

JOL. (*correcting himself hastily*) No, no, not when I left home, time does fly. Well I suppose they'll drag me before the Vice Chancellor, an inarticulate old gentleman who will read me a long lecture and incarcerate me in Holloway prison. It will be a sad trial for you, Mellina, a sad—

(JOLIFFE puts his arm round her, she averts her head. JOHN utters a cry of rage and turns on JOLIFFE, clenching his fists.)

JOL. (*looking at JOHN*) What's the matter with that fellow?

MRS. S. (*still in JOLIFFE'S arms*) Oh, it's—it's —it's John!

JOL. Oh, is it! Then what is the matter with John?

MRS. S. Oh, he's a little subject to nervous attacks. But he's a very faithful servant.

JOL. Is he? It quite slipped my memory that I had engaged John. I don't like the looks of John. I didn't like the look of him when I engaged him.

JOHN. (*advances fiercely with clenched fists*) What the—

JOL. John, take a month, take a month!

(JOHN goes up attempting to restrain his rage.)

JOL. Well, Mellina, dear. I suppose they'll drag me away to prison. But it can't be for more than a fortnight, my previous high character will do wonders for me. (*anxiously*) From what you know of my past, you would consider my character rather a high one, wouldn't you, Mellina?

MRS. S. From what I know of your past, yes.

JOL. Yes, yes, yes, it will be a distressing scene when you leave me at the prison gates, but you must bear up for the sake of the little ones.

(MRS. S. starts from him with a cry, JOHN threatening JOLIFFE and HINXMAN in fits of laughter on the sofa)

HINX. Ha! ha! ha!

MRS. S. Oh—there are no little ones.

JOL. No, no, my mistake, little one, perhaps?

HINX. Ha! ha! ha!

MRS. S. There is no little one.

JOL. I didn't know—didn't know, time does fly. (*goes up stage nervously, JOHN comes down to MRS. SMITH.*)

JOHN. (*aside*) I shall choke him in a minute.

JOL. (*looking round*) Well, I suppose there's nothing left for us but to start back to Town without delay. Are you ready, Mellina, are you ready?

HINX. (*rising*) Stop, stop, stop, Mr. Joliffe, not so fast if you please. There's another little matter agin you.

JOL. Another little matter?

HINX. Yes, the charge of conspiring to commit a bigamous marriage, with the daughter of the proprietor of this hotel. Your wife there, Mellina Joliffe, being alive.

JOL. Oh! (*goes up and sits L. of table.*)

MRS. S. (*with assumed indignation*) Oh!

HINX. I suppose you don't know all your hus-

band's little caperousities, Mrs. Joliffe. (*with enjoyment*) This is his wedding morning, wedding morning number two. (*looking at watch*) It's almost time to set off to the church. (*pointing to table*) Look at the cake and—(*pointing to the wedding favour in JOLIFFE'S coat*) look at Mr. Joliffe's wedding favour.

(*JOLIFFE hastily drags the favour from his coat and crams it into his pocket.*)

JOL. It's all a mistake, it's all a mistake. I can explain. I have had an accident, my recollection is impaired, and when I became engaged to Miss McCafferty, I had entirely forgotten the circumstances of my marriage to this lady.

HINX. What? (*emphatically*) Tell that to the Marines.

JOL. I shall be happy to do so.

HINX. You'll tell it to the nearest local magistrate first, for I'm going to lodge an information agin you.

JOL. But I protest.

HINX. Do you? Well, you are green.

JOL. I may be, for all I know, I may be Green, or Brown, or Jones, or Robinson.

MRS. S. (*eagerly to HINXMAN*) Sir, is there any necessity for me and my servants to remain one moment longer in Steepleton?

HINX. Well, I must prove your marriage, ma'am, either by your word or a copy of your marriage certificate.

MRS. S. My marriage certificate!

HINX. Yes, ma'am

MRS. S. (*pointing to hand-bag on sofa*) Please to pass me my bag.

HINX. Yes, ma'am, certainly.

(*HINX. picks up bag, and is about to pass it to MRS. SMITH, when JOLIFFE snatches it from him.*)

JOL. I'll pass my wife's bag. (*looking at bag—a pretty little satchel*) Doubtless a little present from me.

(JOHN comes in between MRS. SMITH and JOLIFFE and snatches the bag from JOLIFFE.)

JOHN (*handing bag to MRS. SMITH*) I'll pass the bag!

JOL. (*to JOHN—turning him round*) I've given you your month, I've given you your month.

(JOLIFFE and JOHN go up stage, one on each side of the table, gesticulating and talking violently.)

MRS. S. (*takes certificate out of bag and handing in to HINXMAN quickly*) There you are; now may I go?

HINX. Certainly, ma'am. (*returns certificate*)

MRS. S. Come, John, we will return to the station at once.

(JOHN comes R. C., JOLIFFE L. C.)

JOL. Mellina, you're a heartless creature! After the risk I've run in marrying you. Is this loving, honouring and obeying? You ought to cleave to me.

JOHN (*doubling his fists*) I should like to cleave to you!

JOL. (*to JOHN*) You've got your month.

MRS. S. Cleave to you! when in the most cold-blooded way, you forget a young wife and ensnare the affections of some guileless little girl!

JOL. Little girl, is she? You should just see her!

MRS. S. (*very indignantly*) Monster! I trust we shall never meet again! (*aside to JOHN*) You are saved, dear!

(JOHN and MRS. S. move to door R. as WALKER enters.)

WALKER. Luncheon is laid in the parlour, ma'am.

MRS. S. We shall not require it. We are leaving the hotel at once.

WALK. Good gracious! What has happened!

JOHN (*to WALKER*) Hush, don't say anything.

JOL. Mellina, Mellina.

MRS. S. (*imperiously*) Infamous man!

(MRS. SMITH *goes out, followed by JOHN and WALKER.*)

JOL. Mellina, leave your address, leave our address. (*about to follow them, when he is pulled back by HINXMAN.*—HINX R. C.—JOLIFFE L. C.)

HINX. Come, come, old fellow, don't be knocked over. A year or two in prison won't hurt an old dog like you. (JOLIFFE *turns on him*) As you say, time does fly.

JOL. Knocked over! How would you like to be torn from a young wife—the one woman in the world who shares your inmost thoughts, the one woman in the world whose heart beats to yours, the one woman in the world who knows where you live?

(HINXMAN *helps himself to a glass of whiskey.*—JOLIFFE *looking out of window.*)

There they go, my wife and John. (*excitedly*) I don't like the look of that man servant. He's helping my wife over a puddle. I don't like it!

HINX. (*drinking*) Now, then, are you ready to make a complimentary call on the nearest J. P.?

JOL. What do you mean? J. P.—Jolly Republican?

HINX. No, justice of the peace.

JOL. No, sir. I'm not ready. If I get two years, how shall I know that John leaves at the end of the month?

HINX. (*growing impatient*) Oh, I don't know! Now come along quietly.

JOL. Oh, what a dreadful scene there will be downstairs between my best man and old McCafferty.

HINX. Well, say we're just a-going to set out to the church, you see—I'm your best friend; now are you ready?

JOL. (*sinking into chair L. of table*) Oh, my head's come on so bad again——

HINX. Has it—? (*looking at table, sees champagne, takes it up*) Here, have a drop of this.

JOL. Don't, Mr. Hinxman; think of McCafferty.

HINX. (*opening bottle*) We will think of McCafferty, we'll drink his health. (*He fills two glasses, gives one to JOLIFFE and takes the other himself.*)

HINX. (*draining his glass at a gulp*) Here's a husband to Miss McCafferty.

JOL. Poor Patricia, she won't think at all highly of me. What a blow! what a blow!

HINX. (*refilling his glass*) Well, she wouldn't have liked to marry a married man, now would she? (*draining glass*)

JOL. (*sipping his wine*) I don't know. Patricia is a large minded woman! L rge minded and large hearted, great woman altogether!

HINX. (*pouring himself out another glass*) Little too dry, this wine—must try another. (*begins opening another bottle*)

JOL. McCafferty will kill those best men. I do wish Patricia could have seen Mellina. Mellina proves what perfect taste I've got. Patricia ought to esteem it a compliment, my proposing to her when I possess such a beautiful girl as Mellina.

HINX. (*having opened the bottle, fills his glass and drinks*) That's better, that's sweeter. (*replenishes glass ad lib.*)

JOL. (*to himself*) Titus is a humbug. I didn't recognize Mellina at all. He said the sight of a familiar face, or sound of a familiar voice would bring my memory back suddenly, and then——

HINX. (*swaying about with bottle and glass in hand*) Look after yourself, old boy!

JOL. (*aside*) That's familiar enough, at any rate.

HINX. (*swaying a little, with fixed look, slowly and to himself*) They may say what they like, but there's no society so instructive or so entertaining as the criminal classes. (*pointing bottle at JOLIFFE*)

JOL. (*indignantly*) Criminal classes! I believe he's getting intoxicated.

(HINX. *sinks back into chair R. of table.*)

Getting—he's got.

HINX. (*muttering to himself in a dreamy drunken manner*) I wish we could have forty winks before we start.

JOL. (*excitedly*) If I could only give him the slip and make my escape. (*he takes decanter and sniffs it*) Whiskey, Irish. Have another drain, Mr. Hinxman?

(JOLIFFE *pours champagne and whiskey into HINXMAN'S glass.*)

HINX. Thanks, ol' f'ler. (*drinks and coughs, smacking his lips*) Thash better, there's more body in that.

(JOLIFFE *refills HINXMAN'S glass. HINXMAN drinks again.*)

JOL. More body, more head. Drink it up, Mr. Hinxman.

(HINXMAN *drinks it up, rising unsteadily.*)

HINX. I'm going, I'm going, I'm not going to washte my time any longer. Time'sh money, I'm going. (*falls back into chair*) I'm going—(*drops his head gradually on table*) going, going,—(*falls fast asleep*)

JOL. Gone! Now for it! (*looking out of window*) There they are still, my wife and John; I'll soon put a stop to that. (*goes to door R.*) No, I daren't go that way. My best man and McCafferty are below. I have it—my bedroom is above this, and my portmanteau is there ready packed for the

honeymoon. I'll lower it out of the window and myself after it. (*proudly*) I shall return to Mellina with everything brand new. (*feeling in his pocket*) Half a sovereign given me by McCafferty with strict injunction not to change it. What a position—£200 on my head, and nothing in my pocket.

(*He is going to door L., when PATRICIA enters, followed by MISS BUZZARD.*)

PAT. Oh, Montague, why haven't you set off for the church? The time's come, dear; you'll be late for me.

JOL. I was just going to give a finishing touch to my hair.

(*The door R. opens, and McCAFFERTY enters, followed by TITUS, GAWGE and BUZZARD, and they are all carrying their hats and gloves. JOLIFFE goes down R.*)

JOL. (*aside*) Surrounded, surrounded.

MR. G. }

TITUS. } There he is, Captain, there he is.

MR. B. }

(*They all form up in front of where HINXMAN is sitting, to cover him. HINXMAN falls under table.*)

McC. What d'ye mean by skulking about here, when it's time to be off?

JOL. I was just thinking about being off, upon my soul I was.

(*McCAFFERTY pointing to PAT., who is sitting L. C. with MISS BUZZARD.*)

McC. There's a dazzlin' sight for any man on his weddin' mornin', wid the colour of her hair just breaking thro' her veil, for all the world like the sun under a cloud.

(*The men turn to PAT., with a polite murmur of admiration, while JOLIFFE, unperceived, goes hastily to door R., locks it and slips the key in his pocket.*)

MR. G.	} (<i>looking at PAT.</i>)	Charming picture!
TITUS.		Beautiful!
MR. B.		Quite a vision!

JOL. (*aside*) Locked, they can't follow me.

McC. (*turning to JOL.*) And what have you got to say to her?

JOL. (*down R.*) Oh, I'm not worthy of your daughter. She's too beautiful, too good——

McC. Very well, then. Get your hat and gloves and come with me.

JOL. My hat and gloves—they're upstairs. (*crossing rapidly to L.*) I'll fetch 'em! I'll fetch 'em! I'll fetch 'em! (*aside*) Free! Free!

(*He goes out door L.; he closes the door sharply, and is heard to turn the key in the lock outside.*)

McC. What's that! What the devil are you lockin' the door for? (*going to it and rattling the handle*) Open it, d'ye hear me!

TITUS. (*going to door R., tries it*) Why, this is locked, too.

McC. (*crossing to L. c.*) That locked, too; then there's some treason going on.

HINX. (*who is under the table, is heard muttering*) What's this? Where am I?

McC. (*suddenly*) Hark!

HINX. W—where's Joliffe, £200 reward! Where's Joliffe?

(McCafferty lifts up the table-cloth; Hinxman is discovered.)

McC. Mr. Simpson!

HINX. (*rises unsteadily*) No, no, my name's Hinxman. I'm a detective. I'm after Montague Joliffe, he's wanted.

THE MEN. Wanted?

PAT. Wanted—I should think he was; I want him.

HINX. (*trying to collect his thoughts*) On two charges. Running away with a ward in chancery.

THE MEN. What?

HINX. Second—conspiring to commit a bigamous marriage with (*sees PAT.*) this lady, his wife being alive.

ALL. Oh!

HINX. He's given me the slip—where is he?

(*HINXMAN makes a rush down R., is stopped by*
TITUS.)

McC. We can't get out; we're on the first floor, and he's locked us in.

(*A knock is heard outside.*)

ALL. Hark!

JOL. (*outside*) Gentlemen, gentlemen, can you hear me ?

(*There is a cry of rage from everybody. PAT. and MISS BUZZARD cross quickly to R.; all the characters form an oblique line from R. to door L., beginning with MISS BUZZARD down right, next TITUS, PAT., GAWGE, BUZZARD, HINXMAN finishing up with McCAFFERTY.*)

JOL. Gentlemen, I am sorry that some unexpected complications in my domestic arrangements will prevent my fulfilling my contract with Miss McCafferty.

PAT. Oh!

McC. Scorpion!

THE MEN. (*A cry of rage.*)

JOL. I am terminating my connection with the town of Steepleton, taking with me my marriage outfit, for which I will repay the Captain at the earliest opportunity.

McC. Oh, oh! the scorpion! The trousseau I gave him.

ALL. Be calm, Captain, be calm.

JOL. Captain McCafferty, be calm. I am now on my way to catch a train, but I will hand the keys of this room to the station master before I start; he will release you. Patricia, farewell. Captain McCafferty and gentlemen, farewell.

(MUSIC. *The line of characters breaks up. McC. throws up his arms. HINXMAN goes to door L. and tries to open it.*)

McC. The villian! The villian! I'll be the end of him.

PAT. (*rushing to McCafferty*) The shock will kill my pa.

MR. G. } Be calm!
MR. B. }

McC. The scoundrel can't get out of this side of the house. We'll break the door down. Come on!

TITUS. Captain McCafferty, think of the bullet.

McC. Bullet be damned, it's good for me. Come on!

PAT. (*falling back R. c.*) Oh, pa, look!

(*They all turn. Outside the window, a knotted sheet with large new portmanteau attached, is seen to descend.*)

McC. Begorra! The trousseau I gave him.

(*The portmanteau disappears; then JOLIFFE is seen lowering himself. PATRICIA sinks on her knees in the centre of the stage, McCafferty, Gawge and Buzzard, and Hinxman with cries of execration. The Music swells as the*

CURTAIN FALLS.

ACT III.

HOME, SWEET HOME.

SCENE:—*Room comfortably furnished in lodging house fashion. C. at back a fireplace, at back L. a door. Down stage L. a window practicable. Down stage R. a door. R. C. a couch, behind couch a small table, on which stands a terra cotta bust; up stage R., set across the corner of the room, a piano and music stool (piano open) behind piano out of sight, a stool or chair (for business). Before fireplace an arm-chair. On mantel-piece framed photograph of actor playing JOLIFFE. A quantity of letters stuck in chimney glass. Down stage L. C. table and two chairs. Good lamp lighted. Landscape picture hung on wall R., other pictures, furniture, ornaments, etc., etc., to fill spaces. Night-time, blue gas row (or lime) outside window.*

Music at rise of curtain—"Home, Sweet Home."

KITTLES, a servant-girl, is discovered placing a lighted lamp on table L. C.

KIT. Where's missus, I wonder; in her own room a-mournin' over the dear departed, I s'pose. (*looking towards window*) Hallo! that won't do, our bill's got topsy turvey. (*goes to window and turns bill*) Apartments for ladies and gentlemen upside down—that ain't the way to fill our establishment.

(MRS. JACKSON *enters R.; she is a comely woman in widow's weeds.*)

MRS. J. What are you doing, Kittles?

KIT. (*showing bill*) Apartments for ladies and gentlemen upside down.

MRS. J. What?

KIT. Our bill's got topsy turvey.

MRS. J. Oh! (KIT *re-adjusts bill.*) It doesn't matter much; I shall never let my rooms in this dead and alive place.

KIT. (*coming L. c.*) Excuse me, m'um, but I don't think as how you goes h'out and about enough. You ain't been to Rosherville Gardens not once since h'I've been with you. Gravesend is the gayest place I've ever lived in!

MRS. J. Have you ever been out of it, Kittles?

KIT. (*proudly*) No, mum, never; I was born and hedicated here.

MRS. J. It will drive me mad. (*comes to couch and sits*) You know, Kittles, I lost my husband some two months ago.

KIT. Yes, m'um, I've 'eard you mention it.

MRS. J. My income being very small, I was obliged to look round for some means to add to it; this house was advertised as being splendidly adapted for the letting of apartments, and the landlord described it as Brighton-on-Thames. I brought my furniture from London three weeks ago, and here I am. The house is splendidly adapted for the letting of apartments, which nobody seems to take. I suppose the best visitors sleep in the open air.

KIT. Oh, do cheer up, m'um; when the people do come, they'll come in shoals, like the shrimps, and then you'll be able to catch 'em alive and boil 'em.

MRS. J. Go away, Kittles, you're vulgar.

KIT. Yes, m'um. (*going to door L. and turning*) Oh, m'um, excuse me m'um, but I only wish as 'ow I was a widder!

MRS. J. Good gracious! why?

KIT. 'Cos it seems so much more easy to get a husband when you're a widow.

(MRS. JACKSON *rises.* KIT. *coming down to window.*)

KIT. Hark, m'um! There! Blessed if there

ain't a fly with some luggage in at our door, three people inside and one out.

MRS. J. They can't be coming to this house.

KIT. (*opening windows*) Oh, can't they, tho'? There's a gentleman getting off the box.

MRS. J. (*in a hurry*) Show them in here while I run and make myself neat. Be quick, Kittles.

KIT. (*excitedly*) Yes, m'um, I told you so, m'um, I told you so; the shrimps is come, the shrimps is come. (*bustles off door L.*)

MRS. J. (*looking in chimney glass*) I suppose they'll only ask the rent and drive away. But I think I'd better go and curl my fringe in case!

(MRS. JACKSON runs out door R., a murmur of female voices is heard off L., then KITTLES enters.)

KIT. This way, m'um, this way, m'um, if you please. (*aside*) Oh, crikey, what swells!

(KITTLES R. of door comes down L. MRS. SMITH enters, followed by WALKER and JOHN. WALKER carries her mistress's plush bag, JOHN has the wraps and a bag or two.)

MRS. S. Oh, how weary I am.

WALK. Do sit down, ma'am, there, there's a dear.

(WALKER places MRS. SMITH upon couch R. C. then takes smelling salts from bag and holds them to her nose.)

MRS. S. Thank you, Walker. (*looking round*) This is melancholy enough, (*aside to WALKER*) but it's better than another dreadful hotel. (*she leans back wearily and closes her eyes*)

JOHN (*to KITTLES*) Haw, you let apartments here, don't you? (*crossing his leg and leaning on table*)

KIT. (*L. looking him up and down and imitating him*) Yaas. (*aside*) Crikey, here's a tip top valet!

JOHN (*looking round*) This is the sitting room, I suppose?

KIT. Sitting room for the master and the missus, standing room for the domestics.

JOHN (*looking at her with disgust*) What other rooms are there?

KIT. Well, I lives in the kitchen.

JOHN. I don't want to know where.

KIT. Thought you might like to pay me a visit, Tummas.

JOHN. Girl!

WALK. (*to KITTLES*) You mustn't speak to Mr.—to John in that way.

KIT. Oh, I begs parding, I'm sure; I wasn't aware as 'ow you monopolized of him; he won't break, I s'pose?

(*She digs JOHN in the ribs. WALKER and JOHN move away to R. C. indignantly as JOLIFFE is heard without.*)

JOL. (*outside L.*) John! John!

KIT. (*aside down L.*) Here's the master, I s'pect.

(*JOLIFFE enters; he wears white hat and one brown and one white kid glove.*)

JOL. Mellina, I am ignored. (*sits L. C.*) I don't know whether it's with your sanction and approval, but I'm ignored!

JOHN. (*aside to MELLINA*) Mellina, when are we to shake off this lunatic?

MRS. S. (*to JOHN*) Have patience, Montague, he's our safeguard. If the detective is on our track again, we still have the wrong man ready for him instead of the right one.

(*JOLIFFE takes off his hat and is about to put it on the table when he catches sight of KITTLES, who is laughing and covering her mouth with her apron.*)

JOL. (*drawing his hat back and looking at KIT-
TLES*) What's the matter? What's the matter?

(KITTLLES *pulls herself together, then laughs again.*)

JOL. The attendance in these apartments is most unsatisfactory. (*holding out his hat to JOHN*) John! (*no notice is taken*) John, my hat.

(JOHN *looks at him savagely, then turns away
again.*)

JOL. John, you can take—oh, (*checking him-
self*) Oh, yes, I did give you your month this morn-
ing. (*He puts his hat under the chair, then sneezes.*)
Mellina, I don't wish you to reproach yourself,
but my cold arises from your having requested me to
ride on the box seat. (*taking his gloves off, sees that
they are odd*) This comes of leaving one's hotel in a
hurry.

(KITTLLES *goes to door L.*)

MRS. S. What is the name of the girl here?

KIT. (*crossing to c.*) Kittles, m'um!

MRS. S. Kittles, tell your mistress I am waiting
to see the apartments.

KIT. Yes. m'um, I fancy missus is a-puffin' of
her face.

(KITTLLES *crosses to door R., then looks round and
laughs at JOLIFFE loudly.*)

JOL. Here, hi, you, what's your name, Kittles?

KIT. Yes, sir?

JOL. My compliments to your mistress, and I
request that she gives you your month.

KIT. Oh, go along. (*bounces off door R.*)

(JOLIFFE *rises and looks about the room enquir-
ingly.*)

JOL. (*glancing out of window*) John, it has doubt-
less escaped your memory that my portmanteau, my

new portmanteau, still remains on the top of the cab in the night air.

JOHN. (*advancing*) Well!

JOL. Well, fetch it.

JOHN. (*biting his lips*) I shall not.

MRS. S. (*rising*) John!

JOL. You would see me do that myself?

JOHN. Yes.

JOL. You would see me lug that weighty portmanteau off that cab, up those steps, into this house?

JOHN. (*fiercely*) Yes, I would!

JOL. (*mildly*) If you watch thro' that window you will do so.

(*He goes out door L. JOHN sits L. C. with a sigh of disgust.*)

MRS. S. Walker, look the other way and don't listen. (*runs over to JOHN, kneels at his feet, and kisses him*) My poor vexed Montague. (*kissing him.* WALKER *sits up stage in arm-chair.*)

WAL. Now they're going to spoon. Spoon—they don't spoon, they positively ladle.

JOHN. Mellina, this fellow is intolerable. (*kicks against JOLIFFE's hat*) What's this? Why, if it isn't that infernal fellow's hat; out it goes.

(*Picks it up between his thumb and fingers and flings it out of the open window.*)

I say that fellow is intolerable! Ever since he jumped wildly into our carriage just as the train was leaving Steepleton, we have never been alone for one moment. What plan have you got in your little head now? Why have we come here?

MRS. S. Why, listen, you foolish fellow. You know I have an uncle at Colombo?

JOHN. Well, that isn't here.

MRS. S. No, but the P. and O. boat, the "Siam," starts from this place for Colombo on Wednesday.

at noon, and I propose that we take refuge with my uncle till our chancery affair has blown over.

JOHN. Colombo, that's a long way from the Club, Mellina.

MRS. S. Yes, and from Holloway, too. (*rising*)

JOHN. (*rising*) But I don't see why we should be bothered with this mendacious scoundrel.

MRS. S. I've told you. The man is under the strange hallucination that he is Mr. Montague Joliffe and my husband.

JOHN. Confound him.

MRS. S. On Wednesday we give him the slip and start for Colombo, but if in the meantime Mr. Hinxman follows us here, this unfortunate person is locked up, and you escape.

JOHN. Yes, I see that.

MRS. S. I'm very sorry for him, but we're two and he's only one, and the minority must always suffer for the majority. Hush!

(JOLIFFE enters door L., struggling under the weight of his portmanteau, and with his white hat much crushed on his head. WALKER rises. JOLIFFE deposits portmanteau up stage L. C., then comes down and looks under the chair L. C.)

JOL. (*taking off his hat*) It was my hat I found on the railings. (*He replaces hat under chair, and sits as KITTLES enters door R.*)

KIT. Missus is tidy, m'um. Will you please to step this way?

MRS. S. Thank you. John, bring the luggage.

(KITTLES goes out, followed by MRS. SMITH and WALKER. WALKER, as she goes out, looks at JOLIFFE and bursts into laughter.)

JOL. Hi! you! Thingamy! what's your name?

WALK. Walker!

JOL. No repartee, if you please.

WALK. Lucy Adelaide Walker.

JOL. Oh, I beg pardon, then Lucy Adelaide Walker from to-night (*looking at watch*) at 9.30, you will take a month.

WALK. Ho!

(*She flounces out; JOHN has gathered up the wraps, which he has previously deposited by the piano, and is going out whistling.*)

JOL. (*rising*) John! Unstrap my portmanteau and take out my slippers. John!

(*JOHN pauses at door, turning fiercely.*)

John, you can leave my portmanteau alone; don't touch it.

(*JOHN goes out contemptuously.*)

JOL. (*triumphantly*) That's the first time I ever knew that fellow obey my instructions.

(*Soft music as in first act. JOL. looks round.*)

I don't know what Mellina's arrangements are, but I think I shall be very comfortable. I'm beginning to get a little tired of Mellina's airs and graces. I wish I could remember what induced me to marry such a disagreeable girl as Mellina. (*sits on couch R. c.*) Oh, the events of this day no diary that was ever kept has a page large enough to chron—(*His eye rests on the little bust on table R. c.; he starts, falters and moves uneasily and takes bust in his hand.*) I know that bust. I've seen that bust before, often and often—before I forgot how to remember. Titus said that all of a sudden—(*He replaces the bust quickly and edges away from it L. c.*) My head's come on so bad again. That bust has started it. Beastly bust. (*He sits L. c.*) What I was reflecting upon was, that it would take a very large diary to—to—(*His gaze becomes rivetted on the lamp on table L. c.; he moves uneasily.*) I've seen that lamp before; the pattern on that lamp is quite familiar. (*He starts up and edges away to c., he*

wipes his forehead nervously.) Titus never said I should have these sensations! This isn't the sight of somebody's ugly face, or the melody of a miserable comic song, or the—or——(*catches sight of little landscape on wall R.*) I've seen that picture before! I painted that picture when I was a little boy at Dr. Brown's school in Chelsea. (*He goes round the room quickly identifying the various objects.*) I know that—and that—and that; I (*he sees a framed photo upon the mantel-piece*) I know that man. (*snatching the photo*) I've seen that man before. This is the ugly face Dr. Titus spoke about. (*Runs down L. C. to get the light of the lamp.*) No, it isn't, it's my portrait. What's the meaning of this? What is my portrait doing here? (*He is at the mantel-piece again; he sees the letters stuck in the chimney glass, he snatches some of them down, and stares at them wildly, reading the addresses.*) Mr. Jackson! Mr. Marmaduke Jackson! Marmaduke Jackson, Esq.! Jackson, Jackson, that's my name—my name's Jackson, these letters are for me. (*Opens letters violently, throwing them aside, as he sees their contents.*) Income Tax—Titus was right, Titus was right. Boot-maker—tailor, my tailor's bill. (*He kisses the bill wildly as MRS. JACKSON is heard without.*)

MRS. J. (*outside*) I'm sure you'll be pleased, sure you'll be pleased.

JOL. (*starting and listening*) I know that voice, I know that voice.

(MRS. JACKSON *enters R.*)

JOL. That's my wife!

MRS. J. (*with a scream*) Marmaduke! Come back!

JOL. Emily!

MRS. J. Marmy!

(*They rush into each other's arms. Music ceases.*)

MRS. J. Oh, Marmaduke, where have you been? I thought I was a widow. (*wiping her eyes.*)

JOL. And I thought I was—well, I don't know what I thought I was. But I'll tell you all about myself in a minute. (*rapidly*) So you've moved from Brixton, Emily!

MRS. J. (*delighted*) Yes, dear; your employers were very good to me.

JOL. My employers, Grigs and Barber, candle makers, I'm their traveller, bless 'em. (*with a start*) Emily! Emily! how's little Freddy?

MRS. J. Beautiful! he's in bed. Marmaduke, how have you got on for undervests?

JOL. Lovely, don't wear 'em. How's Aunt Matilda?

MRS. J. Glorious.

JOL. Oh, Emily, Emily!

MRS. J. Oh, Marmy!

(*They sit together on couch R. C., he leans his head on her shoulder.*)

JOL. Oh, I'm so glad to get home.

MRS. J. (*drying her eyes and putting her handkerchief away*) And now, Marmaduke, I shall be obliged to you, if you will give me some account of your proceedings.

JOL. (*clearing his throat*) Hem! Certainly, my dear.

MRS. J. I am delighted to see my husband again, of course, if that husband is an honourable, decent, respectable person. You remember what I am, Marmaduke, an affectionate but jealous, determined woman. I'm not to be trifled with, (*clenching her fists*) and if I find that you've been up to any—but I—anticipate—anticipate.

JOL. (*dampened*) Yes, Emily, you do.

MRS. J. (*firmly*) Now you left me about two months ago——

JOL. To go to Dilchester with my samples. (*suddenly*) I wonder what became of those samples?

MRS. J. Never mind the samples; go on.

JOL. At Steepleton Junction there was a railway collision; I was the only victim.

MRS. J. Oh!

JOL. I was carried to the hotel near at hand, and—(*suddenly*) How's Uncle Robert?

MRS. J. Never mind; Uncle Robert will keep.

JOL. (*injured*) I should hope so, Emily; I say I was carried to the hotel near at hand, and I suppose in the confusion another man's overcoat and another man's card-case were carried with me.

MRS. J. Well, what of that?

JOL. I'm telling you, Emily, I'm telling you. Now comes the strange part of my story; when I recovered, I recovered everything but my memory.

MRS. J. What?

JOL. I had not the slightest recollection of the past, you, little Freddy, Grigs and Barber, Aunt Matilda and Uncle Robert—everything and everybody had gone from my memory. In fact, I was compelled to embark in an entirely fresh career.

MRS. J. (*quickly*) Just as if you were a single, unencumbered man?

JOL. (*leaning back, beamingly*) Yes——

MRS. J. (*starting up, clenching her hands*) Mar-maduke!

JOL. (*rising*) My dear!

MRS. J. (*in an awful voice*) Tell that to the Marines!

JOL. (*aghast*) Emily!

MRS. J. Tell that to the Marines!

JOL. I have once to-day expressed my willingness to do so.

MRS. J. (*following him*) Bosh!

JOL. (*horrified*) Emily, you don't mean to say you doubt my——

MRS. J. I don't believe a syllable of it.

JOL. But I——

MRS. J. (*struck with a sudden thought*) Ah, you

didn't know when you came here that I was the proprietress of this house?

JOL. Of course I didn't.

MRS. J. Of course you didn't—Mr. Jackson, who is the lady you have brought to reside in these apartments?

JOL. (*wiping the perspiration from his brow*)
The young lady?

MRS. J. The young lady with the two servants.

JOL. Oh, the young lady with the two servants.

MRS. J. Who is she?

JOL. Yes, who is she?

MRS. J. What is she?

JOL. *What* is she? Yes, the young lady with the two servants. (*attempting to change the subject*) You're not keeping anything concerning Uncle Robert from me, are you, Emily?

MRS. J. (*stamping her foot*) How does that woman come here?

JOL. I'm telling you, Emily, I'm telling you; she was coming in as I was coming in. We were both coming in together; I didn't even notice the young lady was a woman—I mean—er—I don't know.

MRS. J. She told me I should find her husband in this room. Where is he?

(JOLIFFE staggers against the chair.)

JOL. Her husband!

MRS. J. Her husband! Where is he?

(JOLIFFE looks round uneasily.)

JOL. I don't see him for the moment, don't see him for the moment.

(MRS. SMITH is heard without R.)

MRS. S. (*outside*) Unpack my bag, Walker.

MRS. J. Here she is, I'll ask her.

JOL. (*in agony*) I shouldn't—family matters—family matters!

MRS. JACKSON *goes to door R. and throws it open. JOLIFFE darts to L. C. for his hat. MRS. JACKSON returns to him quickly, and takes him by the collar.*)

MRS. J. Where are you going?

JOL. Can't make out what became of those samples, going to enquire!

MRS. J. You'll remain here, while I put a few questions to the lady who happened to be coming in just as you were coming in here. (*She drags him up stage, and pushes him behind the piano, his head appearing over top.*)

JOL. Emily!

MRS. J. If you attempt to stir or utter a sound, I'll——

JOL. Let me explain.

MRS. J. Hush, here she comes.

(MRS. JACKSON *pushes the arm-chair against the end of piano, so that he cannot make his escape, and comes down C. as MRS. SMITH enters door R.*)

MRS. S. I've no doubt I shall be very comfortable thank you, Mrs. Jackson. (*crosses and sits R. of L. table*)

MRS. J. I'm sure I hope so.

MRS. S. (*sitting L. C.*) And I don't think I need trouble you to remain.

MRS. J. (*sitting R. C.*) It's no trouble, I assure you.

MRS. S. (*aside*) A talkative landlady.

MRS. J. You will excuse me, but I understood you to say I should find your husband in this room?

MRS. S. I certainly left him here a few minutes ago; he must have gone out.

MRS. J. Gone out?

(JOLIFFE *tries to attract* MRS. JACKSON'S *attention.*
MRS. J. *motions him to be quiet.*)

MRS. J. You seem to be a very young wife. May I ask how long you've been married?

MRS. S. (*impatiently*) Oh, I was married about two months ago.

MRS. J. (*starts up*) Oh, Heavens! The very time he left me!

(MRS. J. *waves her hand to him to hide himself.*)

MRS. J. (*reseating herself, to* MRS. S.) You are quite contented and happy, I hope?

MRS. S. Fairly so! When you see my husband you will guess from his appearance and manners that I have married much beneath me.

(JOLIFFE *rises and glares fiercely at* MRS. SMITH.)

MRS. J. Attracted for the moment, I suppose, by some fascinating, showy young gentleman?

MRS. S. Hardly so.

MRS. J. Is he fair or dark?

MRS. S. Fair.

MRS. J. With a small scar on the lobe of the left ear?

MRS. S. Really, I have never noticed.

MRS. J. Never noticed? Madame, perhaps I can show it to you.

(JOLIFFE *in desperation is attempting to get over the top of the piano; in doing so he slips and falls on the keyboard; both ladies turn, MRS. SMITH rises; MRS. JACKSON turns to JOLIFFE and points to him.*)

Is that the gentleman?

MRS. S. That is the person.

(MRS. JACKSON *runs to JOLIFFE and brings him down.*)

MRS. J. Madame, this man is my husband.

MRS. S. Your husband, no! (*to JOLIFFE*) What is your name?

JOL. J—J—Jackson.

MRS. S. It wasn't Jackson this morning. (*crosses to R.*)

JOL. Mellina, don't rake up the past; we're both older and wiser since the morning! Time does fly!

(*The door L. opens suddenly and HINXMAN enters.*)

HINX. (*breathlessly*) Hallo! (*coming down L.*) Caught you again, have I?

MRS. J. Who are you?

JOL. Hinxman!

MRS. S. The detective!

HINX. A nice job you gave me, but we took the next train tho', all of us.

JOL. (*recoils*) All of you! How many?

HINX. (*mopping his head*) Captain McCafferty!

JOL. (*faintly*) Oh!

HINX. Dr. Titus!

JOL. Oh!

HINX. Miss Patricia!

JOL. Patricia, oh, oh!

MRS. J. Patricia—who is she?

HINX. Why, the lady this gentleman was a-going to marry this morning.

MRS. J. (*to JOLIFFE*) What, another! (*to HINXMAN*) Sir, this man is my husband!

HINX. (*with a chuckle*) Your husband, too! Why, the gentleman's a Mormon. (*Sits at table, and makes notes in book.*)

MRS. S. Oh, what shall I do! Poor Montague will be taken. (*seizing JOL. on his R.*) He is my husband, he said so this morning.

MRS. J. (*pulling JOLIFFE from the other side*) He's my husband; he'd say anything.

MRS. S. He's Mr. Joliffe.

MRS. J. He's Mr. Jackson.

MRS. S. He's Mr. Joliffe.

MRS. J. He's Mr. Jackson

(*The two women pull JOLIFFE from one side to the other.*)

JOL. (*appealingly*) Ladies, ladies! don't divide on this question. Mr. Hinxman, don't let 'em.

(*MRS. J. goes up back, McCafferty enters, carrying a large pistol case L.*)

McC. (*coming down L. C.*) Is the scoundrel here?
HINX. I should think he was!

(*McC. deposits pistol case on table.*)

McC. And alive, too, and alive.

JOL. (*faintly*) Only just! Only just!

McC. (*going down to JOLIFFE*) I've brought my pistols wid me, the same as I fought Colonel Doherty with, years ago.

JOL. Oh!

MRS. S. (*aside*) I must warn Montague—perhaps in the confusion he may escape. (*she slips out door R.*)

McC. Now you'll cross the water wid me, and satisfy my honour wid your blood!

JOL. Can't get away, can't get away just now; my busy time.

McC. You thought to do for me with the shock of your departure, but ye see I'm one too many for ye.

JOL. Everybody's one too many for me. (*goes up to portmanteau, and brings it down to McC.*) Here, take back the wedding trousseau; it's unworn. Take back the pocket-money, it's unchanged. (*putting half sovereign on portmanteau, which McC. picks up eagerly*) Your bill shall be settled.

McC. Yes, when I've settled you or you've settled me. If you'll not fight in a foreign country, you shall fight me here.

JOL. You've got one bullet in you already. Greedy! greedy! (*goes down R.*)

MRS. J. (*coming down to MCC.'s R.*) How dare you incite my husband to commit a breach of the peace?

MCC. Your husband?

MRS. J. My husband!

MCC. Begorra! it's not bigamy, but trigonometry, he's been attempting.

MRS. J. Whatever his faults, he's the father of little Freddy, sleeping quietly in his cot at this moment.

MCC. And am I not the father of my little Patricia, who ought to be sleeping quietly in *her* cot at this moment?

(*The door opens, and PATRICIA enters with TITUS.*

PAT. is still in her bridal attire. JOLIFFE hides himself behind MRS. J.)

MCC. (*embracing PAT.*) My daughter! There stands the viper!

PAT. (*to JOLIFFE*) Montague, come here. (*she crosses C. MCC. goes down L. sits back of table. HINX. goes up back.*)

JOL. Go away! Go away! Go away! I'm engaged two deep.

(*MRS. SMITH enters door R., followed by JOHN.*)

TITUS

PAT. HINX.

MCC.

JOHN MRS. S. JOL. MRS. J.

MRS. J. You shan't touch him, he belongs to me.

MRS. S. He doesn't, he belongs to me.

JOL. (*to MRS. S.*) Mellina, I am ashamed of you!

PAT. He belongs to me. I've written on his heart the story of my young love. (*goes L. of table.*)
MCC. *sits back of table.*)

HINX. (*coming down R. of JOLIFFE*) Come, come,

ladies, there seems to be some little misunderstanding.

JOL. Think so!

HINX. Now, my good fellow, explain.

JOL. (*madly*) I have explained, and I'll do so again if you'll only produce those wretched marines! My name is Jackson. I am the devoted husband of this devoted lady.

(TITUS comes down between HINXMAN and JOLIFFE.)

TITUS. (*handing two letters to HINX.*) Oh, Mr. Hinxman, these two letters for you arrived at the hotel as we left it. I had quite forgotten to give them to you.

(HINX. takes letters and opens them, goes R.)

JOL. (*to TITUS*) A nice thing you've done; this comes of taking your prescription.

TITUS. (*to JOLIFFE*) I told you to take it easy—you've done so—it's brought your home to you.

JOL. It has brought it home to me.

(TITUS and JOLIFFE go up. HINXMAN takes photo out of first letter.)

HINX. Hallo! What's this? Why, it's the photo of the missing Montague Joliffe. (*to JOLIFFE, looking at him*) Why, it's not like you at all. (*slapping his forehead*) Where have I seen this "phiz" now?

MRS. S. (*covering her husband's face with her hands*) It isn't like John! It isn't like John!

HINX. (*turning*) Why, that's the man. Well, you are an artful couple.

MRS. S. (*embracing JOHN*) Oh, Montague, Montague!

(HINXMAN opens second letter.)

JOL. (*to JOHN*) I'm sorry for you, John; the judge will give you more than a month.

JOHN. And you more than a year.

JOL. No recrimination, if you please.

HINX. Well, this is spoiling a good job, and no mistake. A letter from Screw and Patchett, Mr. Joliffe. (*reading*) "Admiral Turvey and Major Gamboil, having received a most excellent account of the young gentleman who has married their ward, Miss Mellina Summers, desire to withdraw from all action in the matter, and are bringing every influence to bear upon the Vice Chancellor to induce him to inflict a merely nominal punishment; the affair is therefore to be hushed up."

MRS. S. Oh, Montague!

JOHN. Mellina, then everything is settled.

HINX. Yes, everything's settled. (*throwing away letter*)

JOL. (*joyously*) Everything's settled.

HINX. (*crossing to JOLIFFE and saying sharply*) Oh, no, you're not settled yet, Mr. Jackson. You are still wanted for attempting to marry Miss McCafferty.

JOL. Can't be; that lady (*pointing to MRS. S.*) is not my wife.

HINX. Can be. (*pointing to MRS. JACKSON*) That lady is your wife.

JOL. Oh, how intricate the law is. (*retires up stage*)

TITUS. (*coming down L.*) Stop a minute; the charge against this gentleman depends a little on Miss McCafferty. (*to PAT.*) Patricia, we've known each other for a long time! Will you marry me?

PAT. (*crosses L., embracing TITUS*) Yes, anybody!

McC. (*coming down*) What about my consent?

TITUS. My dear Captain, think—you'll always have me near you to watch for the bullet.

McC. Devil take the bullet; the little drop of whiskey I drink is so good and so strong I believe the bullet's melted long ago.

TITUS. Mr. Hinxman, this lady declines to prosecute, and I can assure Mrs. Jackson, and any court of law, that Mr. Jackson's strange behaviour was solely caused by his railway accident at Steepleton Junction.

JOL. You hear, Emily, do you believe me?

MRS. J. I suppose I must.

JOL. She believes me. (*to HINX.*) We shall not require those marines. (*embracing MRS. JACKSON*)

MRS. J. Every married man will be trying to meet with a railway accident now.

JOL. I shan't! I shall give up travelling for Grigs and Barber, and if I take a drive into the country, you shall accompany me, (*to MELLINA*) I shall never forget you, Mellina. (*glaring at JOHN*) I shan't forget you, John. (*to HINX.*) I shan't forget you in a hurry. (*HINX. laughs—to MCC.*) I wish I could forget you. Oh! by the way, I find I was a commercial traveller, so I shall require 2½ per cent. off that little account.

MCC. (*with disgust*) Bah.

JOL. (*crossing to PAT., and shaking her hand*) I shall always remember my kind nurse, Mrs. Titus, that is to be. (*to TITUS*) And, Doctor, your bill shan't slip my memory. (*looking round*) In fact, I'm never going to forget anything or anybody any more. (*to audience*) And last, but not least, I shall never forget you!

(*JOHN and MRS. SMITH on sofa.*)

HINX.

JOL.

MRS. J.

MCC.

(*table*)

PAT.

TITUS.

(*MUSIC AS CURTAIN FALLS.*)

THE END.



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